The Works

OF

Anthony Raphael Mengs

First Painter to his Catholic Majesty

CHARLES III.

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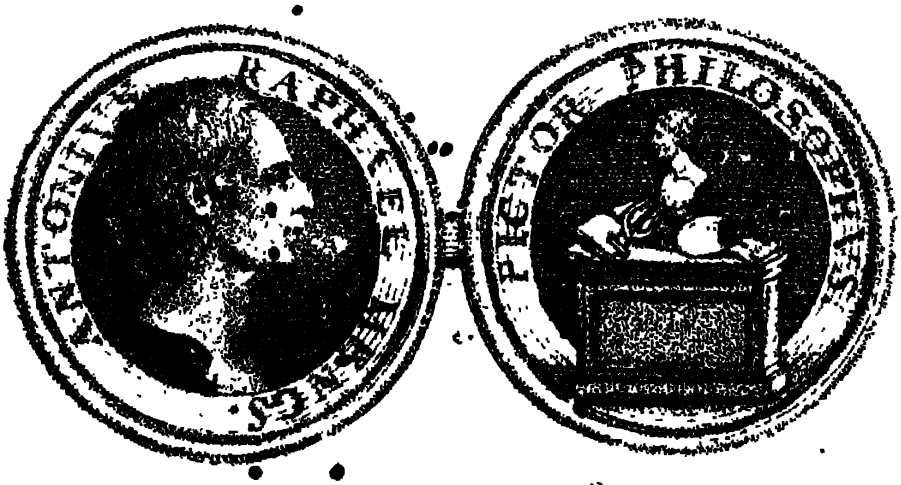

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FRAGMENT

OF A

DISCOURSE

UPON THE MEANS

OF MAKING THE POLITE ARTS FLOURISH IN

SPAIN

VOL. II.

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BEFORE I propose the means capable of making the polite arts flourish in Spain, I ought to examine, if the genius and character of that nation be adapted to that end, since here is no doubt but the disposition of nations renders one more fit than another for the cultivation of different arts and sciences. This national genius is not always constant, but is in part dependant on Nature, and part on custom; and these two causes have such influence between them, that one can scarcely distinguish to which belongs the most effect. We know by experience, that climate makes men differ from each other, and it is also certain, that customs and education render useful or useless,

the effects of Nature. It will be neceſſary therefore to examine theſe two principles, to know the influence they may have in the advancement of the polite arts in Spain.

This kingdom generally enjoys an air very pure and elaſtic, which gives much motion to the humours, and eaſily irritates the nervous ſyſtem. The dryneſs and aridity of the earth contributes alſo to this effect; and their great ſenſibility of fibre ought to produce talents very accute, and penetration capable of learning any thing whenever they would with to take the trouble of ſtudying it. Sometimes this ſenſibility of the Spaniards is too exceſsive for the culture of the polite arts, which require a nervous ſyſtem rather moderate, and which come produced naturally from a climate in the medium, between hot and cold, or humid and dry, which is that of Greece.

The men moſt adapted to make a progreſs in the arts, are thoſe who with the greateſt facility can diſtinguiſh beauty; which is not acquired without having very delicate ſenſes and an open mind; ſince beauty is a propriety in things which by means of the ſenſes, give the underſtanding a clear idea of their good and pleaſing qualities. He who has not a delicacy of the ſenſes, cannot receive from objects that impreſsion nor will his ideas occur ſo quick as is neceſſary to communicate to the mind the delight of beauty; this being ſometimes the only caſe in which the mind and the ſenſes have equal enjoyment. He who has read hiſtory wil

know to what excefs of pleafure the Grecians were tranfported by the effects of beauty.

Our fenfes are fo weak, that we have never arrived to conceive, in what conlifted the enthufiafm of that nation for the arts. But returning to my propofition, I fay, that although the Spanifh nation is not fo natural as Greece for the promotion of the arts, it has, however, the neceffary quality, more than any other, to make greater progrefs in them; provided they would correct the inconveniences of cuftoms, which are oppofed to the good difpofition of phyfic.

Nations, as well as particular men, work according to the neceffity which arifes from caufes natural and accidental. When this neceffity exifts for a length of time, the remedies which they apply will laft in proportion, and will become cuftomary. Thefe tiranize over the fenfes and reafon of thofe who have habituated themfelves to them from their cradle, and except from fome powerful force or motive, they never abandon them. The firft inhabitants of Spain were barbarians, therefore barbarous ought to be their cuftoms. The Romans who conquered this country, introduced there fome cultivation, but their principal ftudy was to dig gold and filver, vermilion, and other metals of their mines.

The Vandals and Goths then fubdued this kingdom, and introduced there, their natural barbarity. Laftly came the Moors to accomplifh the ruin of the few reliques which

the Romans had been able to leave. Then at laſt when after ſo much bloodſhed the Moors were entirely driven out of this country, their talents revived, and they applied themſelves with ardour to the improvement of the Belle Lettre, but no progreſs could they make in the arts, being deficient in every idea of beauty, the more becauſe continual war, and conſequent neceſsity had fixed the attention and honour of the Spaniards in arms and riches. From that it neceſſarily followed, that the little magnificence which the King and the Grandees wiſhed to employ in the temples and palaces were executed by ignorant and diſregarded people, and wanting other examples of good taſte, they dedicated themſelves to imitate the Gothic and Mooriſh. Thoſe who ordered ſuch works, were alſo more ignorant than the artiſts, becauſe they were in general people accuſtomed to arms, and to the ſtudy of juriſprudence, or theology; deſpiſers of every good taſte, and barbarians to the arts.

Spain appeared glorious under Ferdinand the Catholic; but that great King being diſtracted by the care of war and politics, did little to promote the polite arts. In his time the Indies opened their new treaſures, and thoſe riches attracted the attention of all the Spaniards. New reigns, new fortunes, and new hopes agitated their minds, and nothing but gold could merit their eſteem.

Charles the Fifth occupied the nation in new wars; and his valor and enterprize intoxicated

the Spaniards for military glory, nourishing that ferocity which is natural to war, and so contrary to that calm tranquility which the arts require.

Philip the Second, of character opposite to his father, was a declared lover of the arts. He undertook the magnificent work of the Escurial, and generously rewarded the artists; but the customs of that nation, or the constitution of the state not having changed, the love of the arts concentered in him alone, without being communicated to the nobility, who continued to think as at first, only on arms and riches. He planted also the Escurial in a desert, which could not for that reason be observed but by few; and finally it had the misfortune, that when the Spaniards began to cultivate the arts, and wished to seek them anew, and to learn them from Italy, they had already begun in that country to fall from a good taste; and therefore those who came after that reign adopted that which was vitiated.

They began, notwithstanding, to cultivate designing, and in Seville they formed a school of painting, without being promoted or favoured by the government, but solely by the commerce and opulence of that city, which gave occasion to the ingenious to occupy and advance themselves.

The Sevilian painters, saw not however, nor studied the examples of the ancient Grecians, nor knew not beauty in their works; by which reason they were pure imitators of nature, without knowing in the least how to choose what

vas beautiful. Nevertheleſs, they thought to
.ave touched the ſummit of perfection, becauſe
hey poſſeſſed the moſt neceſſary parts of the
rt; but they were very diſtant from the moſt
oble parts. They dedicated themſelves to fol-
ow truth, without regarding beauty; nor did
ey know the ſuperiority of the Italian ſchool
that time, which was revived almoſt a new by
cans of the Caracci's, when Italy had repoſed it-
lf a little after its unhappy ſtate, in which it
d been tormented by the wars of Charles the
th, and Francis the Firſt.

Philip the Fourth honoured painting much,
the perſon of Don Jaines Velaſquez; but
k not the good road to perfection, becauſe
ough he had got modelled ſome of the beſt
ient ſtatues at Rome, they were ſepulchred
he palace of Madrid, where no one knew or
ld profit himſelf by them.

Charles the Second thought of making great
tings in the Eſcurial, and at Madrid; but
one of his vaſſals knew the art of freſco,
er for want of opportunity, or by the
eiſe directed to the ſimple ſtudy of
ution; he ſaw himſelf obliged to ſend to
for Lucas Giordano. The fortune, ap-
e, and facility in the painting of that fa-
Neapolitan, led many Spaniards to imi-
im; but as the ability of Giordano ar-
from practice, acquired by imitating the
rs of all the beſt Italian ſchools; the Spa-
deprived of theſe means, could not
their intent; and the worſt was, that

eking to follow Giordano they departed from ıe imitation of Truth, which they had pur- ıed until then, without acquiring the part of ıe taſte of beauty which was preſerved in aly.

From that time nothing elſe has been done ıt to propagate ignorance, by means of bad ſtruction, and one might almoſt compare ıain to a country of infirm people placing ıards at their boundaries that no foreign phy- ıian may enter.

I have rapidly ran through the hiſtory of ıain, without touching on the other arts, be- uſe painting ought to be the miſtreſs of good ſte. Of their architecture, I ſay only, that al- ough it has been almoſt forgotten, even to ır days, yet it was cultivated with good axims by ſome profeſſors. It had ſcarce began be removed from the Gothic ſtyle, when ey built the Eſcurial, an immenſe and ſolid ork, done on good principles of building, but thout any idea of true beauty or elegance. ıs an emblem of the character of the prince ıo conſtructed it. In ſpight of the multitude artiſts employed in that great work, they ex- ıded very little the arts in the generality of e nation, probably becauſe they con inued think, that the great and the beautiful conſiſt ly in riches; and from that ignorance we produced, that monſtrous magnificence of ars of gilded wood, which cuſtom cancelled ery idea of beauty in the form; recalling all attention to the richneſs of the matter.

That unhappy maxim brought upon itself another ſtill worſe of making ſtatues of wood, painted and gilded, with which they diſgraced ſculpture becauſe in this manner, it is not the form of the ſtatue which gives an idea of their merit, but the colours, and the richneſs of it. It was impoſſible, that a people who had always before their eyes ſuch objects, could acquire a good taſte becauſe this is not formed but by means of the habit which the ſenſes take, in ſeeing perfect things, and when they are not ſuch, they are at leaſt ſimple, and contain the mere neceſſity becauſe although they appear ruſtic and poor they will always be nearer to beauty than thoſe replete with unreaſonable ſuperfluity and the reaſon and the ſenſes will have leſs fatigue to diſtinguiſh naked beauty, than when buried in a maſs of inutility. If to diſcover beauty one meets this difficulty, much more difficult will it be to diſcover the ſublime, which is the mode of giving a clear idea and conception of a grand object, conjoining rapidly and with ſimplicity, the extremities of the beginning and end, and comprehending much, in the leaſt compaſs poſsible.

After having ſeen the difficulty which nature and cuſtoms oppoſe to the progreſs of the polite arts in Spain, it is neceſſary to find the remedies and for that it will be uſeful to examine again the reaſons and accidents by means of which they have flouriſhed in other nations.

The power and faculty of man as a reaſonable being, are very great, but in general he de-

not put them in practice except when he is obliged to it from neceſsity. This neceſsity is of two kinds; the abſolute and the optional. The polite arts have no relation with the firſt, but ſpring from the ſecond; for where there is power eaſily ariſes the will; and man being by his talent, and by his conformation capable of comprehending, and of imitating every property and external quality of things, imitation therefore becomes natural to him, and from this the arts have derived their birth. Some might deny that Architecture is the daughter of neceſsity, but he will then confound it with the art of building, which is not ſuſceptible of beauty, or can be the directreſs of the other arts as is architecture.

It is commonly believed, that in the Eaſt men firſt began to make Images and Idols for religious worſhip; but theſe nations did not exalt the arts to the points which merit the term of beautiful, becauſe they contented themſelves with the ſole ſignification of the thing: from whence an image was valued the ſame as a name or hieroglyphic, without either conſidering perfection or beauty; and thus they compoſed certain monſtrous figures, to ſignify different imaginary properties, or to make their Gods, frightful and horrible as their ſuperſtition which conceived them. They were a little more exalted during the time of the Egyptians. The Phœnicians added a little more of finiſh to their works, becauſe they required this in their commerce, and they worked more metal than ſtone. These, in my opinion, diſtributed the arts throughout

all the coaſts of Aſia, Africa, and Europe, but always in that ſtate of ruſticity and barbarity in which they remained until they were cultivated by the Greeks.

Examining why the arts made not great progreſs among their firſt inventors, although it is ſo eaſy to add to invention, I believe the cauſe has been, that the ideas of men go always in following progreſsions and of courſe if the beginning is bad, the end ought to be very bad, ſo that the polite arts among thoſe nations who began ill ought to be always worſe in continuation; and as the fruit of a bad tree muſt fall before it comes to maturity. To beginning ill might likewiſe contribute the deformity of the people, their ignorance of Beauty, and the diſeſteem which they had for the Artiſts; who beſides not being at liberty to abſtract themſelves from the form of the Idols, which the prieſts had preſcribed, contented themſelves, as I have ſaid, with the ſole ſignification of a thing, and when they wiſhed to make any thing particular they augumented the matter and not the form, making extraordinary and gigantic figures.

The Phœnicians on the other hand thought of nothing but their commerce, for which reaſon it was very natural that they ſhould range their artiſts in the claſs of Mechanics, who ſerved in a branch of their trafic.

When laſtly the Greeks began to compoſe a wiſe nation, and the Athenians particularly to [illegible] and had ſufficient philoſophy to give the true value to works of genius, then the arts

appeared in their greateſt ſplendor. Every one favoured them in Greece. The ſituation of ſo many iſlands which made nature ſo various and beautiful; the temperate climate, and the beauty of the inhabitants, the cuſtoms, the ſweet liberty, the greateſt eſteem which they had for beauty, and the ſenſations in thoſe minds ſo well organiſed, and even poverty itſelf concurred to to that happy combination. Merit opened the way to the higheſt honours, even to apotheoſis. They conſidered beauty as a gift of the gods. Men were more valued for that which they were, than what they poſſeſſed. And the ſtimulus above all to the artiſts was, to ſee that their judges were Philoſophers, and that the ſame who regulated the republic were of the proper claſs of artiſts themſelves, as happened to Phidia, friend of Pericles, and to Socrates the ſculptor, and firſt of the ſeven wiſe men, and the oracle of all the world. We know well the immenſe riches of Phidia, and the great premiums that were given to the celebrated painters and ſculptors. This principally conſiſted from almoſt all the works being executed at the public expence of ſome city; in conſequence of which, poverty inſtead of being a diſadvantage was uſeful, becauſe theſe people ſought not magnificence in the value of matter, but in the art of the profeſſor which they employed.

Although ſtatuary (undoubtedly the moſt ancients of the arts,) was very early known in Greece, it remained for a long time in a ſtyle ſomewhat dry, after the manner which we ſee in the Tuſ-

can Vaſes, which in truth are of the primitive Grecian taſte, becauſe the Tuſcan works in marble, or of alabaſter of Volterra, are of a different ſtyle. In fine the Tuſcans ought to have had that Grecian ſtyle, being a double colony, firſt of the Phœnicians and afterwards of the Greeks, as is proved by their monuments, becauſe except ſome obſcure points of mythology they contain no other but Grecian deeds, particularly of the times heroic.

This ſtyle was not general to all Greece, but ſolely where the Egyptians and Phœnicians introduced it, that is, by the coaſt of the ſea; but inland I believe they began much later to make idols, nor did they recieve the art from without, but invented it among themſelves, beginning from the PLASTICA.

The principal occaſion of the introduction of the arts, were the ſtatues which they erected to the conquerors at the Olympic Games. Theſe they did at the public expence of the country of the conquerors; from whence all their compatriots had intereſt that they ſhould be done as they would wiſh. The artiſts in drawing theſe ſubjects had opportunities of examining the beſt proportioned, and moſt beautiful bodies; and the glory of immortalizing themſelves by their works, united with the competence of others who expoſed themſelves in thoſe celebrated places, were potent ſtimulus's for the ſculptors, and gave facility to the amateurs to judge better of their merits by compariſon.

This firſt imitation of truth gave a degree of

perfection to the art, because the diverſity of the figures which they retraced, neceſſarily exited a ratiocination, and a diverſe manner; but the propenſities of thoſe people to beauty made them obſerve that youthful bodies had more of it than old ones, becauſe they did not contain ſo many ſigns of human imperfection, and that they comprehended all the eſſential parts without the minutiæ which fatigues the ſenſes and and reflection, and that they were of a form more ſimple and beautiful. By this, and with the cognition which they had already acquired by imitating the bodies moſt exerciſed, they knew which were the parts that moſt concurred to the perfection of man, and the different qualities which are characteriſtic to each; as for example, force, legerity, the great and little, youth and age. They diſtinguiſhed their characters in the moſt ſimple manner, and they found by that the moſt perfect ſtyle, or to ſay better, the ſtyle of Beauty. Their Deity was all beautiful, and although they repreſented him in a human figure, they avoided the ſigns of animal nature; and by that one ſees not in their Jove and Neptune either wrinkles or veins, notwithſtanding they repreſent perſons robuſt and aged. When they had to give any altered and ſtrong expreſſion, they never made it exceſsive, but in a manner moſt ſimple, and, without altering the beauty more than that little which was neceſſary to diſtinguiſh the difference of another ſtate of the perſon, and to give a clear idea of the paſsions.

Since of the many things which man executes

all have a relation to himſelf, and nothing can delight him which has not ſome relation to his ſpecie, by that reaſon the Greeks applied themſelves ſo much to the ſtudy of the human figure, and they found in it all that which could appear beautiful to man, and ſince we have beſides the habit of comparing all things with ſome circumſtance of our own, they took from the proportion, reſt; and character of man the ideas for all the form, ſuch as for architecture, vaſes, or for any thing which has a form.

Painting perfected itſelf almoſt in the ſame time of ſculpture, which certainly commenced by the PLASTICA. With regard to the eſteem which they made of the one and the other, I believe painting held the greateſt, as well from the price of their works, as for the honours which they accorded to its profeſſors. Sculpture could not, in my opinion have, acquired its higheſt perfection until the time of Apelles, by means of Liſippus, and Praxiteles, becauſe it was neceſſary before them that the other artiſts ſhould conquer the greateſt difficulty in proportion, character, beauty, and majeſty; productions of men which operated all by reaſon, as one ſees by the monuments which ſtill remain of that time.

The Grecian architecture had no infancy; and from the cottages paſſed repeatedly to the ſumptuous edifices of the Doric order, which they always preſerved, receiving only little variety, becauſe they found not any thing better to accomodate themſelves to their ſolid manner of thinking.

Greece finally was conquered by the Romans, but although theſe conquered by force of arms yet they could never equal the Grecians in the arts and ſciences, whoſe genius forced the conquerors to declare themſelves conquered; ſo great is the force of merit, even with barbarians. The Romans had never great artiſts, becauſe they did not hold them in that eſteem which they merited, and becauſe the road to fortune, and public reputation in Rome was only by arms or war, and the people oppreſſed by the claſs of ſenators, thought little of the arts; from whence whenever they wiſhed to make any beautiful work, they went in ſearch of ſome Grecian to execute it.

Among theſe they preſerved the arts for a long time which went declining by little and by little; but among the Romans the taſte introduced by by the Grecians remained but a very little time, becauſe they debaſed the arts by employing even their ſlaves in them, and they became reputed as low artizans, and much inferior to the profeſſion of a ſoldier.

Some will believe perhaps that the Roman architecture ſurpaſſed the Grecian. I do not think ſo, becauſe I do not believe that the Romans had any architecture proper to themſelves.

One ſhould conſider what Rome was before the Tarquins. Tarquinius Priſcus made the circus, and the aqueduct, a magnificent undertaking, and certainly executed by the Tuſcans, who never invented any thing in architecture, but availed themſelves always of the ancient Greek,

however leſs perfect, and alſo ſomewhat alte: Then when the Romans acquired a little more culture, they employed the Grecian artiſts, as did Auguſtus, Trajan, and Adiran, who were thoſe who certainly built moſt in Rome.

The compoſed order which the Romans uſed, is not properly a new thing, but a mixture of the corinthian and the ionic. The firſt I dare ſay had not much credit among the Grecians, becauſe among the ruins yet exiſting in many parts one ſees not that order except in the ſame corinthian; from whence I believe that the uſe and the name of that order of architecture has been invented after the deſtruction of that celebrated city, and that the Romans having made ſome little capitals of corinthian metal, with the foliages and the figures as we ſee, this gave to them that name, ſince they called corinthians, candleſticks, and vaſes, made of that metal, and although the lantern of Diogenes, and the Tower of the winds of Athens were of the corinthian order, I believe they were built after that time.

The different ſtyle which one ſees between the Grecian and Roman buildings gives one to underſtand the diſtinct character of the two nations, becauſe the laſt by the pompous luxury of ornaments degraded the beauty of the Grecian ſimplicity, which did not admit any thing that was without reaſon, or againſt reaſon. The aforeſaid luxury which aroſe from the exorbitant opulence of the Romans, and the little ſenſation which they

from beauty, made their ſtyle ſoon fall into barbarity, becauſe ſucceeded ſoon by poverty, they loſt their taſte, by having loſt its ſupport. To the Greeks it did not happen thus: here the intire ruin of the nation was neceſſary to extingiſh in them their good taſte, becauſe with the loſs of liberty, and in their humiliation, they did not introduce barbarity until they embraced chriſtianiſm. Not that this holy religion is contrary to the arts, but it aroſe from the abuſe which the Greeks made of it by diſputing with fury, and dividing themſelves into various ſects: their ſublime genius's and natural ſubtilty o'erbounded the limits of a religion ſo pure and ſimple, and paſsed with too much rapidity from the love of matter to that of the ſpirit: they changed the ideas of things, and diſfigured their cuſtoms. To liberty ſucceeded obedience; to the love of glory, humility; to the eſteem of beauty deſpiſal of things terreſtrial, and laſtly to human ſciences, Faith. For fear that the people ſhould return again into idolatry they deſtroyed all the ſtatues which were ſaved until then from the rapacity of the Romans, the wars, the incendiaries, and ruins. Every thing in ſhort changed its aſpect; but with all that they did not ceaſe to diſcover always the ſuperiority of the Grecian genius over that of other nations, in thoſe things which they did, although they no longer regarded the arts, which were hidden in forgetfulneſs, or at leaſt practiſed only by religious perſons, who in their ſyſtem did not aſpire to excellence. At laſt came the invaſion of the Turks, and the ſeed

of Mahomet who with the ſcimeter and ignorance compleated the ruin of whatever was not to be found in the alcoran, and eſtabliſhed barbarity without hope of remedy.

The Greeks who in great numbers fled to the iſlands of Italy, and to the coaſt of the Adriatic, and the Mediterranean, drew with them ſome ruſtic painters, who knew ſcarcely any thing of their art, but ſince they were much more in practice, and more free than the Italians, they went running every where to paint images, which the chriſtian piety ordered them to do.

The moſt magnificent buildings which have been conſtructed in Italy after the diviſion of the eaſtern and weſtern empires, are the works of the Grecian architects, as is the church of Saint Mark at Venice, the tower of Piſa and others.

It is likewiſe worthy of conſideration, that the ſame accidents by which the polite arts were exalted from nothing in Greece, were the cauſe of their revival in Italy, although in an inferior degree; either becauſe that nation is leſs natural than Greece to the very delicate ſenſations of beauty, or from being reſorted to with principles more complicated; which takes from the ideas of ſimplicity, the only feeling by which our underſtanding prepares itſelf for the aforeſaid ſenſations of beauty.

Religion rendered neceſſary the art of building, ſculpture, and of painting images for divine worſhip. The liberty of the Italian republic inſpired the people to think of making great things, and to give birth to the idea, alrea-

dy exhauſted in Greece, and to diſtinguiſh themſelves by excellent works. Finally, this liberty, which revived in Italy in the 14th and 15th century, made human induſtry to flouriſh by the rule, THAT HE DOES MUCH MORE WHO DOES WHAT HE WISHES, THAN HE WHO DOES ONLY THAT WHICH HE OUGHT TO DO. A free man with inclination does all that he can, more or leſs according to his capacity, but a ſlave does only that which he is commanded to do, and his natural will is deſtroyed, by the violence it cauſes it to obey. The habit of obeying, at laſt oppreſſes his capacity, and his race will become worſe and worſe, ſo, as no longer to deſire that which they deſpair of obtaining.

We ſee in fact that the polite arts began to flouriſh in Italy when liberty gave its impulſe to the republic of Venice. Its traffic and the continued communication with Greece, made them conceive ideas worthy of its greatneſs. . . .

LETTER

OF

ANTHONY RAPHAEL MENGS

TO

MONSIEUR FALCONET.

FRENCH SCULPTOR AT PETERSBURGH.

YOU will not be surprised, if a man who has not the honour of knowing you personally takes the liberty of writing to you: the quality of artists being common to both is a legitimate cause. Your name has been known to me many years; yet I have never had the satisfaction of seeing any of your works, and only by your writings does it arise, that you come to know of my existence. I have desired a long time, to know them, because treating of the arts, I wished to find in them, that which would give me instruction.

However, I have not been able to obtain that consolation but imperfectly, during the few days that Mr. Zinowieff, Russian minister at the court of Spain, did me the favour to lend me

only the ſecond volume, containing the tranſlation of the books of Pliny which treat of the arts.

Having opened it, I was ſtruck with the obſervations upon the ſtatue of Marcus Aurelius, which I read through. The work appeared to me to be well reaſoned, and written by a man of talent, who explains himſelf with energy, but at the ſame time (pardon my ſincerity) with too much acrimony.

Permit me to give my opinion of your judgment upon the ſtatue of Marcus Aurelius. I am well perſuaded, that your obſervations are well founded, but if you had ſeen the work in its place, and had at the ſame time obſerved all the other equeſtrian ſtatues exiſting in Italy, you would have wondered leſs at the praiſes given to that ſtatue, becauſe all the others, although they are more exact, appear in compariſon to it, cold and lifeleſs: I mean thoſe of the moſt able ſculptors, which exiſt in Venice and at Florence, becauſe thoſe of Piacenza, and of Rome, of Bernini and of the Cornachini, do not merit our conſideration.

No one inſtructed in the true ancient ſtyle of the art, will ſay, that in the time of Marcus Aurelius they executed works of the firſt taſte; from whence they gave that title to the horſe of Marcus Aurelius, only by compariſon of others; and you know very well, that the works which are admired by people of good taſte, are generally eſteemed, not becauſe they are without defects, but only becauſe they have ſomething, extraordinary and ſignificant in them.

For that reaſon, the horſe of Marcus Aurelius enchants becauſe it has a certain animated expreſſion, and perhaps the ſame defect which you obſerve in the poſture of the leg, is that which gives him that emotion and admirable expreſſion, not being according to the ordinary mechaniſm, but in a momentaneous ſtate, in which an animal could not ſubſiſt but for an inſtant.

For that which regards the rider, he is not repreſented as a man who affects to ſit well on horſeback, but as an Emperor, who with an air of bounty extends the right hand in ſigns of peace to his people, according to the cuſtom of the ancients, and with the other guides the horſe.

I am not inſtructed as well as you in the motions of a horſe, becauſe I have not had an opportunity to ſtudy them particularly, but I conjecture what is the art of giving them a motion, by the cognition of that of man which I have ſtudied. I have known even in Rome itſelf ſome profeſſors who criticiſed the moſt claſſical ancient works, and copying Apollo in the Vatican, pretended to have corrected him by putting him upright, and preſently loſt the major part of the beauty of the original: but that is not my object at preſent.

The principal part of your work, which induces me to write to you, is that which you ſay of my friend Winkelman, which has been felt by me very ſenſibly, becauſe it appears that your diſdain for him does not ariſe from any other cauſe than the imprudent eulogy which he has paſſed upon me: and ſince you pretend that I ought to take that eulogy as an expreſſion

of friendſhip, as ſuch I am obliged to reply for him. Beſides that, I write to you from the deſire of occupying a little place in your eſtimation, which I certainly ſhould not merit if I could think of myſelf as my panegiriſt has explained. Only thoſe perſons who have ſtudied the works of ancient great men can preſume to have ſo much merit. As for me, I have meditated upon them as much as I have been able, and find them of the firſt order, conceived and executed with a delicacy and juſtneſs inimitable, and in general are done with the beſt taſte, founded on the reaſons of art and nature.

I am ſenſible of the ſuperiority of the genius of Raphael and the merits of the other great artiſts of the paſt age; but I do not by that forget to admire the talents, vivacity, and eaſe of my contemporaries.

I have propoſed to myſelf to imitate the moſt eminent parts which I have diſcovered in others, contenting myſelf to be the laſt of thoſe who ſeek the good road, rather than to be the firſt among thoſe who are dazzled by a brilliant but falſe glory.

For this reaſon I have had the ſatisfaction to ſee my works well received among nations who eſteem thoſe of living authors, comparing them with the beſt of the artiſts deceaſed.

I ought to be grateful for the favor with which my works have been received at Rome, Dreſden, Florence, London, and Madrid, and by that I ſeek an excuſe for Winkelman, if led away by his friendſhip he has beſtowed hyper-

bolical praiſes on his compatriot. His ſtyle is as it happens to be with every one who would wiſh to praiſe a friend; neither ought his expreſsions to be interpreted literally, becauſe (I believe) nor leſs ſhould yourſelf be taken rigorouſly when in praiſing your fellow-citizen Mr. Puget you ſpeak of ſeeing the blood run within the veins of his ſtatue of marble. I do not pretend to juſtify every thing which Winkelman ſays, ſince it would be unjuſt to ſupport all the weakneſs's of a friend; and equally ſo, not to ſpeak in his defence when there is reaſon. Winckelman is not an infallible judge, nor was he of our profeſsion, and although he had been as us, are we ſecure of always judging right? If we had this great priviledge, our productions would be perfect, becauſe it is not the occaſion which is wanting to us, but the judgement; it happening to us daily to produce works which we ourſelves are the firſt to condemn.

That which Winkelman ſays of the head of the Horſe of Marcus Aurelius, perhaps will be ill founded according to the idea which we now have of the beauty of that animal, but I pray you to conſider that in no ancient monument is to found the head of a Horſe like that of a Ram, which appears to us ſo beautiful, and which in Spain they call CABEZAS DE CARNEROS. By that I am not far from believing that the ancients held as moſt beautiful, the head of a horſe which reſembles that of an ox, as was that of the famous Bucephalus of Alexander. Winkelman wrote ſome things before he knew

antiquity in all its extention, but as for his honour I can attest that he was incapable of selling the truth for any interest or human regard.

For that which regards the passage of Plutarch cited by Winkelman, I cannot judge in the Greek tongue; but all the literati of Italy, think Winkelman to be so learned in that language that I cannot doubt it. You will besides permit me to say that the French translation of the HISTORY OF THE ARTS, is not exact, because the term ENTIEREMENT NEGLIGE is not to be found in the original German; and besides that the literal version which you refer to in page 53 does not appear to me to be correspondent to the character of the original language; because I do not believe that any Grecian ever said PAINTERS OF PORTRAITS, and Winkelman translated not so much the words as the sentiments of Plutarch. In short there is nothing more easy than equivocation, and in proof of that you yourself are deceived in the citation of the note page 54 taking for two different discourses, the one which Winkelman makes of me. But who would with to regard these trifles?

For me, I am much obliged to you for the courtesy with which you speak of me in page 55 and your genteel manner makes me desirous of obtaining your friendship, and to seek new excuses for my friend Winkelman, if he has spoken of you with little exactness in the citations, because in substance you agree, according to the note 18. book 36. p. 75. of his work.

I agree with you that it is very ill done to ſpeak with little conſideration of a perſon ſo reſpectable as Mr. Wattelet (or any other) of whom the ſame Winkelman wrote me a thouſand eulogies when he knew him at Rome. If I could poſſeſs the talent of writing well, I would give reaſons and facts, and teach things uſeful, without loſing myſelf ſo as to contradict any one; becauſe it appears to me that one might write a good book without ſaying ſuch and ſuch a perſon is deceived; and laſtly if you can prove to me that ſlander is an honeſt thing, then I will agree that it is of little conſequence the manner in which one attacks the reputation of one's neighbour; and I add that ſarcaſm, and inſult, are the worſt ſtyles of complaining and blaming, and from whence reſults always the worſt evil on him who uſes it.

As to the queſtions between Winkelman and Wattelet, it appears to me that the laſt had no motive for what he ſaid, ſince we always hold for good the moſt beautiful ancient ſtatues; and I believe if you would with to ſpeak in good faith you would agree, that the hero propoſed by Wattelet is more a comedian than an ancient ſtatue; and if I may ſpeak with ſincerity, I believe, that were you not ill diſpoſed againſt Winkelman you would not have fallen into that ſophiſm to prove with reaſons contrary to Wattelet that he was in the right, becauſe you, being of the profeſsion, know as well as me that the character of heroes or of Demigods is of true beauty, and ſomewhat ſuperior to human nature, and that this

beauty does not admit of extremes; and thus we see it practiced in the said Antinous of the Vatican and in the Meleager which certainly have not the character that Wattelet gives to his heroes. I say the same of the Fauns. That cited by you and the Cupid of the same age, are two beautiful youths, nor are their forms that of Fauns. But if you reflect upon the beautiful Faun of Borghese with the young Bacchus in his arms, you will not find there any thing silly; as also in that at Florence which sounds the symbals, except the head and the arm which are modern. In Rome there are many Fauns elegant forms, and they are not Apollo's as you say, but they might be compared to the Bacchus's, except in the physiognomy and posture: besides that, one ought to make a distinction between fauns and sylvans.

I am persuaded that if Mr. Wattelet had come to Rome before he published his books, he would have explained with elegance of style the ideas which so many beautiful productions of the art by the Grecians imprint upon the minds of every man of fine genius and sensible heart; nor would he have employed himself in adorning ideas taken from the studies of the professors of Paris; and yet I believe that being a man of talent, (as he is) if he had been at Rome he would perhaps have had the fate of being influenced by the ANTIQUOMANIA like many other great French artists his predecessors, who contributed so much to the glory of his age of Lewis 14th.

Winkelman dedicated his book to the Arts, to time, and to me. Time alone will ſhow if his work be uſeful: I believe it will be uſeful, and I think alſo that every one who reads his hiſtory to inſtruct himſelf, and particularly the article of the firſt book page 313. of the tranſlation, will find much profit from the knowledge of Antiquity; and when alſo there is found ſome paſsion for the Greeks, this ſame paſsion will be uſeful, becauſe the modern reſtorers have treated of all the good which they have of that happy preoccupation; and whilſt this has remained in Italy the arts have been ſupported with honor; and in France they have fallen according as this has languiſhed, and where it has never penetrated the arts have never made any progreſs.

When you will have perſuaded the world that Winkelman is an ignorant man, and that Cicero, Pliny, Pauſanius, Quintilian, and other ancient authors knew not what they ſaid on the ſubject of the arts, does it appear to you that we ſhall have gained much by that? The Laocoon, the Gladiator, the Fauns, the Apollo, the Venus and many other ſtatues will always ſuſtain the honor of the Grecians; nor can you yourſelf deny that beautiful proportion, ideal beauty, facility of the poſture, nobleneſs and equalneſs of the ſtyle, knowledge of the bones and muſcles, ſolid expreſsion, the ſoul and vivacity of the characters, the drapery which dreſſes but hides not the naked, and laſtly the execution which one admires in every place

and in every light, you cannot deny, I repeat but that theſe are merits which one finds in a ſuperior degree in the beautiful productions of the Greeks, You know yourſelf what difficulty it coſts to acquire any of the aforeſaid parts; and wiſhing to be ſincere I will confeſs that in oppoſition to ſuch merits, very little is that of expreſsing well the folds, the fleſh and the veins; and laſtly grand ſtrokes, boldneſs of deſign, and that which is called SPIRIT, (the only refuge of the moderns,) vaniſh by the ſide of the ſolid beauty of the ancients.

I wiſh you the glory of perfecting a work which will convince the world of your ſuperior talents, and I feel great regret at not being able to ſee the magnificent equeſtrian ſtatue, which you are working and of which I have heard ſuch praiſes, and which would give me, according to my imagination, much pleaſure, I wiſh you would publiſh your ſtudies made upon Horſes, in order that the public and the arts might profit of your lights.

I crave pardon for having troubled you with ſo long a letter; and begging the honor of your friendſhip I offer you my ſervices in Rome, to to which place I ſhall go, in the courſe of a few days.

LETTER

OF

ANTHONY RAPHAEL MENGS.

TO

MONSIGNOR FABRONI.

PURVEYOR GENERAL OF THE COLLEGE OF PISA

NOTE OF THE EDITOR

The following letter is in reply to one written last year to Mengs, by Monsieur Fabroni, Preceptor to the Royal Princes of Tuscany, and a person well known in Italy for his literature.

That prelate had written a description of the famous group of Niobe, which the Grand Duke sent from Rome to Florence a few years before. But this prelate knowing of what weight the advice of Mengs was in these matters, sent him his dissertation, begging his opinion of it before he published it. Mengs was then in such a deplorable state of health, that his death was expected every instant. Nevertheless, he dictated the following letter, with the note accompanying it, which treat of various points of the aforesaid dissertations, that have latterly come to light, and the illustrious author has wisely profited of the suggestions of Mengs.

PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

I HUMBLY beg your pardon for not having immediately replied to your polite letter, having been impeded by an extreme weakneſs of health, which has ſcarcely allowed me the faculty of ſpeech, ſufficient to dictate a letter, being almoſt deprived of my voice. Beſides the charge which your Excellency has deigned to give me; that is, to tell you my ſentiments upon the diſſertation you have ſent me, is a thing ſuperior to my ſtrength at all times, but greatly ſo at the preſent, in which I do not find myſelf in a ſtate fit for ſuch application. However, the inclination to obey your Excellency, has made me conquer every other regard: I therefore proceed to the execution of your command, and beg you to accept whatever is good or bad in theſe my reflections.

I have many times peruſed the diſſertation upon the collection of the ſtatues of the fable of Niobe; and it appears to me to be the intention of your Excellency to give an elegant and learned deſcription of them, almoſt in the form of a panegyric, by raiſing every beauty of the art to the higheſt degree, and to give it that ſplendour which ſuch a work merits. Under this appearance I cannot but admire this learned diſſertation; finding in it all that, and even more then I could have deſired; notwithſtanding I have noted ſome trifling things, although almoſt of no con-

ſequence, in the annexed papers, with the numbers at the margin of the aforeſaid work.

I am convinced that the mode held out by your Excellency, in that diſſertation, is that which ought to be obſerved ſpeaking of things poſſeſſed by great Princes and praiſed by the public; from whence in another ſtyle, they could not be approved of, either on the one or on the other part, becauſe the criticiſm alone renders it uſeful in time, when the force of diſpleaſure which it occaſions is diminiſhed, and leaves place to every one to accept of the truth.

If however prudence obliges one to reſtrain too much ſincerity, which might diſpleaſe others, and injure him it expoſes, friendſhip ought to take away ſuch ſuperfluous regard, and permit that freedom which otherwiſe would not be allowable; from whence I ſuppoſe that with your Excellency I may be allowed to manifeſt ſome ſentiments, when with another I ſhould be ſilent.

It could not paſs unnoticed to your Excellency the great inequality of the figures which compoſe the collection of the ſtatues of the fable of Niobe; from the great incorrectneſs of many of them, and the ſuperiority in beauty of many other ſtatues which we have of the ancients. In the Vatican is preſerved a Venus of no great excellence, and one might ſay, almoſt awkward, but with a head very beautiful, equal to that of Niobe; and that head is certainly its original one, not having ever been detached from it. This ſtatue is certainly

the copy of another much ſuperior; and at Madrid, in the Royal Palace, is preſerved a head entirely ſimilar to this of the Venus in the Vatican, but of a perfection ſo much greater as not to admit ſcarce of a compariſon. Thus I ſuppoſe will be the ſucceſs of the ſtatues of the fable of Niobe, which appear ſufficiently beautiful, becauſe we have not now any of the moſt excellent; therefore I can never believe, that your Excellency can conſider this collection as truly the work of one of the beſt artiſts; in the mean time it might be taken rather as a copy done from one of the beſt originals, and executed by different artiſts, more or leſs good, and who, perhaps, alſo joined to it thoſe figures which are ſo very inferior. It might be likewiſe, that they were in part done anew, in the low times of the art, and as much deteriorated by the reparations of the moderns, as by that of the ancients before they were digged up; ſo that to inveſtigate if this work be of Scopa, or of Praxiteles, is certainly a beautiful topic for writing; but I fear that on ſight of the ſtatues it will appear ſuperfluous: beſides it is very difficult to diſtinguiſh that which one could not know in the time of Pliny, who ſufficiently ſhows that the diverſity of ſtyle ought to be almoſt imperceptible.

I beg your Excellency not to believe that I am a depreciator of the monuments of antiquity, or in particular, that I little admire thoſe of which we ſpeak; much to the contrary, I venerate many others even inferior; but I make

a diſtinction in the parts of the art, between the bounty of the ſtyle, and the perfection of the work. The firſt diſcovers the tracks of the maxims with which the ancients worked; but the perfection is peculiar, as the artiſts are more or leſs of ability. In conſidering the firſt part, I admire almoſt all the monuments of antiquity, excepting only thoſe of the time in which the too great ignorance of the artiſts impeded their leaving traces in their works of the inſtructions of their predeceſſors. But when I conſider alſo the moſt eſteemed monuments of antiquity in the part of perfection, I do not find that the whole merit that extreme praiſe which we read, and which was conceded to them by ſo many illuſtrious and great men; for inveſtigating more and more their hiſtory, as well as the works themſelves, it appears to me incredible that we can poſſeſs the works of the moſt celebrated artiſts of antiquity; and if to my eyes, thoſe which we have appear inſuperable, I ſhall accuſe my natural ignorance, rather than cede it to reaſon, which tells me they are not ſo.

As Rome was many times deſpoiled of ſtatues, one cannot know for certain if they left the works of the moſt famous artiſts. All the names which we read on the ancient marbles, are obſcure in hiſtory; beſides that, many are falſified by the moderns, and perhaps invented like that of Glicon. I believe Phædro alerts, that even in his time fictions names were put to ſtatues; and ſuch will be perhaps that of Liſippus, to the Hercules in the palace of Pitti. But what ſhall

we ſay in admiring the ſublime Apollo of Belvedere worked in Italian marble? and of ſo many other excellent ſtatues, confronting Pliny, where he ſpeaks of them as a new diſcovery of the cave of Luni. Who can be certain that the ſuperb group of the Laocoon is that praiſed by Pliny? and although it be, may it not be done in the time of the ſame Titus, and praiſed by the hiſtorian from ſome hidden purpoſe? ſo much the more as this is of five pieces of marble, and in the eldeſt ſon is an incorrection too viſible not to be obſerved.

You will aſk perhaps, how theſe works could have been ſo famous? it is this which humiliates us, that we have not wiſdom ſufficient to know and to exalt the greatneſs of the Greeks; and to ſay the truth, it would be even more uſeful to the advancement of the arts of deſign, that one ſhould regard the monuments remaining, principally by conjecture to know with right reaſon, which ought to be thoſe that we have loſt. To the contrary, reputing them now as the moſt excellent, many of our artiſts excuſe their natural ignorance by ſaying, that even in theſe maſter pieces, they find not only ſome imperfections, which effectually they could find even in the works of the moſt famous, and which are inſeparable with humanity, but they find alſo errors.

A thouſand thoughts have occurred to me upon this ſubject; but I do not wiſh to trouble your Excellency, nor can I confide in myſelf for conveying them intelligibly. I am &c.

1. It would be a misfortune, if the excellency of the arts depended upon liberty incompatible with our times; from whence this thought would discourage princes in protecting them, and the artists in executing them.

2. It appears to me, that painters and sculptors of the first epoch sought not grace, but solely the imitation of truth, and successively beauty, which always excludes all rigor; and by as much as we can know of the few ancient paintings which remain, their style was more soft, their clare obscure more sweet, and their contours more simple and less intricate than in the modern painting; the same may be said of the grandeur and elegance of their sculpture.

3. I never can comprehend how grace can be called austere, being two qualities directly opposite.

4. I believe Praxiteles and Apelles did not change so much the forms as the style, expressing after the most easy manner the outlines of beauty.

5. I do not comprehend, how there can be more than one grace in the art. The designs of Raphael, Leonard, and Sarto, merit the name of beautiful; as also those of Guido, and of Albano: those of Correggio are graceful; and those of Parmigianino are affected and studied.

6. The ſharpneſs of the eyebrows is not deſtructive of the lines, but rather is uſed by the ancients to ſhow their colour which, if they are black, give a ſeverity, which by that ought to expreſs with the greateſt acuteneſs, the angle of the eye brow. In fact, in the head of Jove, one obſerves the eyebrow, conſtantly acute, and in the Deity of flaxen hair, one ſees it ſoftened. If it were in ſtyle, one ſhould find that character angulate even in the mouth, noſe, and in all the other parts, ſuch as one obſerves in ſome Tuſcan or very ancient Grecian monuments.

7. The good Winkelman was ſomewhat viſionary; a defect excuſable in antiquarians. I have in chalk, the head of which he ſpeaks: the eyebrows do not diſcover any particular difference; nor has Pliny ever ſaid that there were two Niobes, one of Scopa and the other of Praxiteles.

8. It appears to me, that the difference of the forms between mothers and children, conſiſts more in the greater or leſſer gentility, than in the natural character of the forms.

9. If one admits of very ſweet harmony, one ſhall deſtroy by that the auſtere ſtyle. The auſtere can only be in the ſublime and at the moſt in the beautiful, but never in the ſweet or graceful ſtyle.

10. The breaſts are certainly abundant, but as if they were drooping down, which happens with women of advanced age.

11. It does not appear to me that this figure repreſents man in a dying ſtate, but dead. And the breaſt does not ſeem much ſwelled with muſcles, but the ſtructure is ſolely that of an active youth, as even now we ſee (though ſeldom) in nature; but this ſtructure depends more upon the bone of the thorax, than upon the muſcles; yet it appears to me that they elected that truth more in reſemblance of the idea of the ſubject which they wiſhed to repreſent; becauſe their ſyſtem, and art which they added to truth, did not ever conſiſt either in the increaſe or change of truth, but ſolely in the choice of the greateſt beauty, and ſimplicity of the forms. The Laocoon is repreſented as a ſtrong, healthy old man, convulſed by poiſon, and nothing more; but the Torſo is, as I have ſeen many times truth itſelf.

12. I believe if your Excellency will conſider well the words of Plutarch, you will not be able to condemn them, becauſe it does not appear to me, that he wiſhes to ſay, that painters neglected other parts, but ſolely carries on the compariſon of painters by ſaying that in making the images of man one applies oneſelf to expreſs the eyes and all the parts of the face, where, as one might ſay, the ſoul reſides, not

taking ſuch care of the other parts; but this one ought to underſtand only as regarding the likeneſs of ſuch and ſuch a man, becauſe here one treats of a portrait, upon which the compariſon goes. In fact we ſee the ancient ſtatues with the heads of portraits, and the bodies in the moſt elegant proportion, which perhaps ſuch as had not; and they repreſent the Alexander painted by Apelles, with the thunderbolt in his hand, had perhaps the face of Alexander, but not his figure.

13. By what I have obſerved of the ancient heads, theſe have always the eyes not ſo long as the good modern heads, but certainly their fize conſiſts in the form and ſhape, and in the exact encaſement of true beauty.

14. It is not true, that the bones which encircle the eye ought to be large; this doctrine would be even dangerous; becauſe the ancients have the jugal always rather a little elevated, in order not to enlarge the face and render it triangular.

15. The term FORESHORTNING belongs to paintings, and has not place in ſculpture, except when one would wiſh to ſay, the foreſhortning of the muſcles in their contractions, and the conſequent effect of the fold of a member.

16. I could aſk a little indulgence for the moderns, becauſe it is not neceſſary to abuſe ourſelves in order to elevate the ancients,

to whom, perhaps, in lively expreſsion one may ſay ſome of the moderns are ſuperior.

17. It appears that we do great injuſtice to Leonardo, Michel Angelo, Raphael, Andrew del Sarto, Tilian, Correggio, Paolo, and to many others, when we would with to aſcribe the revival of painting to the Carracci's, and perhaps only to favour the Niobe; nevertheleſs the profile of the ſhoulders of the woman of the transfiguration, the other near to the lunatic, and many others of Raphael, reſemble much more the Niobes then the heads of the ſame Guido.

FRAGMENT

OF A

SECOND REPLY OF MENGS

TO

MONSIGNOR FABRONI

UPON THE

NIOBE.

SECOND NOTE OF THE EDITOR.

The foregoing was the letter which Mengs sent to Monsignor Fabroni. I have found besides among the papers of our Philosophical Painter, a fragment of another reply which he thought to have given him more fully; and because this fragment contains also some useful information, I wish not to deprive the public of it, esteeming as precious every production of that famous man.

PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

HAVING received the diſſertation of your Excellency upon the collection of the ſtatues of the family of Niobe, together with the prints, and with one of your polite letters, I had the greateſt curioſity to read this diſſertation, in which I could not but admire the delicacy of your ſentiments, and your penetration into the ſecrets of the art; ſo that I thought to have replied to it quickly without extending myſelf by any very great reflections; but having then conſidered that you required me to examine the whole with the greateſt care, and to expoſe with the greateſt candour whatever preſented itſelf to my mind, I reſolved to obey you.

I will firſt tell you, that your works appear to me ſo perfect that I find no exception in them, becauſe you have entered into the fable with ſuch vivacity, that you have given it an air of truth.

I ſuppoſe your Excellency has had examined by connoiſſeurs if the marble of which the aforeſaid ſtatues were carved be of Greece, or Italy; becauſe if it be of the laſt, the queſtion in the treatiſe is anſwered; namely if they be the works of Scopa or of Praxiteles. I confeſs beſides to your excelleney that theſe two artiſts appear to me ſo reſpectible, ſo great, and ſo excellent, that I know not how to bring myſelf to believe that we have any work of theirs among thoſe which have remained of the Grecians. It ap-

pears to me alſo as Pliny has ſaid, that the difference of the ſtyle of theſe two ſculptors was not very conſiderable, becauſe even then it was difficult to diſtinguiſh them.

You will permit me to make ſome reflections upon the difficulty which I find to believe that we are in poſſeſsion of the moſt excellent works of antiquity. Every one knows that Rome was ſeveral times deſpoiled of the beſt things to ornament Conſtantinople, and that in the times of Theodoſius and others, all the ſtatues in Rome were deſtroyed; from whence one may argue, that thoſe which eſcaped ſo cruel a ſentence, ought to be the leaſt famous, or ſuch as were in ignoble places and neglected.

If the excellency of a work could perſuade one that it is of the moſt famous maſters, the Gladiator of Borgheſe will be that of Agaſias, but this name is not to be found among any of the eminent artiſts: the ſame might be ſaid of the Torſo of Belvidere. That name of Glicon given to the Pharneſian Hercules, one ought to ſuſpect of ſome falſification; becauſe beſides not having any account of a great ſculptor of that name, one finds in the palace of Pitti another Hercules reſembling the aforeſaid, with the name of Liſippus, which makes one believe this to be of the ſame works to which the ancients gave fine names, as Phedrus ſays in his Exordium of Book 5.

If the Pharneſian Hercules had been the true work of Glicon, he who copied it to make that of Pitti, would have engraved the ſame name to

equalize it with the original. I believe this a a copy of the other, from the great reſemblance; and becauſe it appears to me that it is a portrait of Commodus. One may add alſo that neither Fulvio Orſini, or Flaminio Vacca who deſcribe the diſcovery of the FARNESIANO, do not mention a word of the inſcription; in the mean time the laſt ſpeaks of that of Pitti. One may add alſo that the manner in which the letters of the inſcription are engraven, is not certainly that which they uſed in the beſt time of the Grecians.

But what ſhall we ſay of the moſt beautiful ancient ſtatues which have remained, as is that of the Pitian Apollo of Belvedere? Shall we ſuppoſe it one of thoſe works which have immortalized their authors? If its beauty makes one believe ſo, it is certain however that it is of the marble of Carrara, or of Seravezza, and although one would with alſo to ſuſtain, that ſome famous Grecian had ſculptured it in Italy, Pliny however atteſts that the ſaid cave of Luni, or be it of Carrara, was recently diſcovered, and of courſe it is probable that the ſtatue was made in the time of Nero, and placed at Neptune where it was found; and perhaps its author was not of the ability of the other artiſts employed by that emperor in his edifice at Rome, where neceſſarily they ought to have executed the moſt precious things.*

* It will be an error perhaps to believe that Apollo was found in the houſe of Nero; becauſe if it had been thus, Pliny would have ſpoken of it, as he ſpoke of the Laocoon, and of other ex-

The greateſt doubt would be to define the marvellous group of the Laocoon; the maſter piece among all the monuments which have remained of antiquity, and executed with ſuch maſterſhip in Grecian marble, that it leaves no doubt of the ſuperior abilities of the ſculptor. On this work Pliny beſtowed his greateſt eulogy ſaying, that it was the moſt beautiful ever known. But one may aſk if Pliny was a competent judge? as he admires above all the SERPENTS which he calls DRAGONS; nor does a perſon ſhow great knowledge who can admire ſo much an acceſſary thing, becauſe that would diſcredit the principal. One may alſo doubt if that be the ſame group of which Pliny ſpeaks, becauſe he makes it of one piece of marble whereas this is compoſed of five.

The name of Ageſander is not to be found in other celebrated authors as an excellent ſculptor; and ſince it is not likely that he could have executed only that work, one may with ſome foundation ſuſpect, that the exceſsive praiſe which Pliny gives to that group ariſes from very different cauſes; that it be either from his friend-

cellent ſtatues, known in his time. It is more probable that that ſculpture was of the time of Adrian, when the arts arrived to the highest degree under the emperors. From whence the place where that Apollo was found, was more likely to have been that magnificent villa which Adrian had in Anzium; in which ſays Philoſtratus, in the life of Apolonius Tianeus, lib. viii. cap. 8. this emperor deposited a book, and various letters of that philoſopher; and he adds that that villa was the moſt pleasing to Adrian of all his imperial palaces.

Neither do I believe that Apollo is killing the ſerpent Piſon, but rather that he is aiming at the family of Niobe.

ſhip for that artiſt, or his complacency to the Emperor Titus, who this work perhaps ſufficiently pleaſed, or laſtly from the impreſsion theſe ſerpents made in him, which he ſolely praiſes in a work where there are ſo many others eſſential beauties to be obſerved. Among theſe, the mode of working the marble is remarkable, being left by the chiſel, eſpecially in the fleſh, without the appearance of the raſp, the pummice, or of cleaning; a ſtyle of working which one obſerves in many other egregious works, as in the Venus of Medicis, &c. All the ſtatues worked in that manner are leſs finiſhed in the minute parts, and prevails in them a certain taſte which never enters into the art, except after having conquered every difficulty; that is, when the artiſts are arrived to that negligence, and facility which in place of diminiſhing, admirably increaſes the delight of the the ſpectators. This ſtyle however, cannot have been introduced in the art at the time of the moſt excellent artiſts, becauſe the moſt regular way is ſimply to begin by the moſt neceſſary, to proceed by acquiring lights to expreſs the eſſential of things, and refining the ſtudy to chooſe laſtly the moſt beautiful, and the moſt uſeful, by which one arrives to perfection, which conſiſts in the equal execution of all the parts, in their good order; from whence reſults a whole capable of exalting our underſtanding to the comprehenſion of the ſubject repreſented by the artiſt. Proceeding further, and ſeeking always the facility of things, and finding always the

greateſt difficulty to unite all the parts of the art, that is, the perfect imitation of Truth, with a choice the moſt exquiſite, and with juſt order, one abandons by little and little the parts moſt laborious, which are thoſe produced from the rigorous imitation of Truth, and one forms certain rules of practice drawn from the moſt famous works, by endeavouring to imitate them in preference to truth. This is what forms that pleaſing taſte which gives an idea of perfection of the art, as well as Truth. Of this ſpecies all the works appear to me which are executed only with the chiſel.

That which makes me ſtill believe that this ſtyle of working marble was not of the artiſts of the firſt order is, that in the time of Adrian, when they moſt ſtudied to imitate them, they worked in a manner very different; they finiſhed with ſufficient ſtudy and ſmoothneſs, as is the Hercules of Pitti, whoſe ſtyle the artiſts of that copy endeavoured to imitate, to make it paſs as a work of that famous maſter. It is always more eaſy to imitate the ſtyle, than the reaſonings and ſcience of the originals; and thus the artiſts after the oppreſſions of Greece, failed little by little in theſe parts. From whence I doubt ſtill more that the ſculptures which we poſſeſs, are either not the moſt excellent of antiquity, or elſe copies. But, not to be too troubleſome to your Excellency, I omit other reflections which I could adjoin to the foregoing.

You will no doubt accuſe me of audacity, becauſe I exclude from excellency ſo many ancient

ſtatutes which all people admire as being moſt beautiful To this I dare not reply with that liberty I could wiſh. Better would it be for a man of letters to do it who poſſeſſes the experience of the art, and has acquired it by a mature examination of the ancient ſtatues and monuments. Notwithſtanding, to ſatisfy you at leaſt in this part, I ſay that if the Apollo of Belvedere had the fleſhineſs and morbidity of the ſaid Antinous of the ſame muſeum, it would without doubt be much more beautiful; and ſtill more ſo, if the whole were finiſhed as much as is the head. And the group of the Laocoon would be ſtill more admirable if the figures of the children were executed with the delicacy which one obſerves in other works. But all human things, however beautiful they may be, could ſtill be more ſo; and ſince every one is ignorant of abſolute perfection, no one can determine the limits to which theſe artiſts arrived who were ſo much eſteemed, and praiſed, by men ſo reaſonable and intelligent. Therefore as we have no monuments which we can with certainty ſay are of theſe celebrated maſters, I hope to have pardon if I believe that their works comprehended perfection, and equality of ſtyle, imitation, choice of truth, corrections as much as the art can allow, exempt from every negligence, and full of that greatneſs, which I do not know how to diſcover in the works that have remained.

Theſe reflections inſtead of diminiſhing in me a veneration for the things of antiquity, renders them more eſtimable, conſidering by thoſe

that remain, what ought to have been thoſe which we have loſt.

One ſees alſo ſo much ſcience, and maſterſhip in the works done by ſlaves and LIBERTI who were thoſe employed in theſe arts at Rome, that although they wanted the eſteem and honors which had exalted them ſo much in Greece, yet nevertheleſs one obſerves in theſe works, even to the total decay of the art, the excellency of their ſchool, which is always deficient in the moderns, and which will render always more eſtimable the reliques of the ancients.

Returning finally to the collection of the ſtatues of Niobe, I have the boldneſs to tell your excellency that I believe it a copy of others much better of ſome of the Grecians; but each of an artiſt of unequal merit. I ſuppoſe beſides that having been reſtored in the low times of the art, and in part done anew, from this ariſes the great inequality of the work, and of its parts.

By what I can conjecture concerning the harſhneſs, which you have obſerved in the eye-brow and hair, it does not appear to me that it comes from the ſtyle of the maſter, but is rather done expreſsly to ſignify the black hair and to give with it a greater expreſsion of ſerioufneſs and ſadneſs to the figure; becauſe if it were ſtyle, one ſhould find it alſo in the mouth, and in the other parts which are ſuſceptible of angles; and that which has been the intention of the artiſts is deduced clearly from the heads of Jove which remain in all the ancient monuments. All have the eye-brow expreſsive, and delineated with

force, which one does not find either in the Bacchus's, Venus's, or Apollo's, which the ancients have repreſented of flaxen hair.

I confeſs that my feeble talents do not arrive to diſtinguiſh the different kinds of grace, although I know that beauty and grace are things very different: nevertheleſs I underſtand how they place in ſculpture the contours called foreſhortening. But the force of theſe expreſſions will depend upon the idiom of the Italian language, which I do not poſſeſs as I could wiſh. Be it as it may, I call in my ſtyle the deſigns of Raphael beautiful, &c. . . . . .

LETTER

OF

ANTHONY RAPHAEL MENGS

TO

DON ANTONIO PONTZ.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following letter was printed four years ago at Madrid, in the work of Anthony Pontz, entitled VIAXES D' ESPANA or travels in Spain. Mengs having also wished that they should publish it, wrote it in Spanish, in which language he had not a great facility of writing, therefore various things remain somewhat confused. To remedy this defect, means have been taken to correct it as much as possible; however, without retouching it so much as to alter the original style. A few notes are adjoined to explain the signification of various words proper to the arts.

This same letter was printed at Turin, translated into Italian, but so badly, that it gave great grief both to myself and Mengs, who, if death had not prevented him, was determined to have translated it himself, and to publish it, to do away the bad opinion which he thought the world must have of it from that translation; because, to the want of clearness which is in the Spanish, there are added, errors, and manifest contradictions.

The memoirs of Correggio were written by Mengs at Florence, to give it to those who made the collection of the lives of painters of all the schools, who, however, extracted only that poor article of Correggio which one reads in their works.

His principal end, besides that of making known the merits of the great Correggio better than it was before, was, to supply what was deficient in the life written by Vasari, and to correct his equivocations. Notwithstanding, many have believed that Vasari did not write that life with all the instruction and impartiality necessary. Mengs likewise believed it, but did not wish to interfere too much in such questions, and contented himself with his ordinary moderation to elucidate well the facts upon which he established the reputation of Correggio, without entering into this dispute, nor cared for the opinion or sentiments of those who make it a national cause to support Vasari.

The practical lessons on painting, at the end, have been gathered from different parts, where they were spread without order or method. Mengs dictated them at various times, in various languages, and to various disciples, according as they occurred in his instructions. Each wrote them according to his capacity; and for that reason, many of them are found in such confusion, that it is impossible to decipher them, and they have become for that reason abandoned. But by that I do not intend to say, that these which are published, are free from error; quite the contrary. I know the disorder in which they are found; the irregularity of the style, the continued repetitions, the errors of language and of construction, and his confused mode of explaining himself. I make this remark in order to prevent the murmurs and censure of certain persons who to vent the rage which the essential merit of the work will excite on their delicate self-love, run after words and phrases. Let them therefore know, that I abandon to them, all they may find here of this kind to exercise their criticisms and I consider it as much as they would wish to condemn. It is sufficient to say, that they leave me in the opinion, that their heads are full of empty words, and that envy only torments those who are possessed of it.

SIR

YOU aſk my opinion upon the merits of the moſt remarkable paintings which are preſerved in the royal palace at Madrid to publiſh it in a deſcription that you are going to give of Spain. You do me honour, and animate me, by believing me capable of ſuch an undertaking, which beſides being ſuperior to my ſtrength, is alſo more difficult than you imagine, principally becauſe I am not a man of letters, and have not grace to treat of a ſubject ſo delicate.

You know very well that to me few paintings can appear ſo beautiful as to others; although I admire the works of great men ſtill more than thoſe who make up the train of vulgar amateurs, with the difference however, that thoſe find an infinite number of excellent painters; and I find only a ſmall number, and reduce it to thoſe few who merit the glorious title of the great.

Nevertheleſs it is certain that we have all a common right to value the works of the belle arts; becauſe the learned and ignorant have each more or leſs an idea, that they have to give delight by the imitation of things known; from whence they approve of thoſe which, according to their underſtanding, have this quality. If works are ſo inferior, that beholders in viewing them, can diſcover the defects immediately, they deſpiſe them;

but if by the variety of objects, pleasing and easy to comprehend, they delight the sight, then they approve of them: if however they meet great complications of reasonings, of which the most easy guide them to the knowledge of the difficult, they form to themselves in that that case the pleasure of supposition, by exalting their understanding and flattering their self-love, and they praise as from gratitude the said work more or less, according to its natural and habitual conditions. Thus the devout, the lascivious, the learned, the idiot, approve of different objects, with greater or less enthusiasm: however from things too superior, and totally beyond our understanding, we receive little or no delight.

From whence you may consider how various must be the opinions of men with respect to the works of painting, and how dangerous it is to give with a sincerity ones sentiments upon the same; because every one is bigotted to his opinion of that which he approves, or disapproves, and generally he has the misfortune, that what others abase he praises, not from affection to the thing praised, but from self-love. Man not being able to tolerate himself from being surpassed by others in his understanding, and not having force to oppose reason, has recourse to the remedy of discrediting whosoever says the truth with the title of evil-speaker, or at least depreciator, or of an insatiable man; from whence it is sometimes a misfortune to see errors, and always imprudent to discover them without necessity.

Notwithſtanding I wiſh to oblige you, ſpeaking however with a painter, who knows the difficulty of the art, and the impoſsibility of poſſeſsing it without defects. I have not the vanity to make myſelf a judge to criticiſe thoſe who are of the ſame profeſsion of myſelf, and aſſure you, that I have great eſteem for all, even thoſe, who according to the rules of the art would be very cenſurable; and when I have no other motive to eſteem them, I admire them for the courage and eaſe with which they have executed their works, and which often are not deficient in being done after the beſt principles. If therefore I attempt to expoſe ſome critical reflections, I do it only to be of ſome utility, of which you give me reaſon to hope.

Firſt, before undertaking the deſcription of the paintings, it appears to me not uſeleſs to give a ſuſcinct idea of painting in general, in order that perſons little inſtructed in that matter, may be able to enjoy the beauties of the excellent productions which I am going to deſcribe.

You are not ignorant that painting has been at all times held in ſuch eſteem, that the ancient Greeks called it the Liberal and Noble Art, and laſtly introduced the term of the BELLE ART, which ſuits it very well. One has, however to reflect, that painting is a noble or liberal art, from the mental ſtudy which it neceſſarily requires; and the ſuperiority of the underſtanding and noble mind which he ought to have

who practices it. It is alſo a noble art for having by its excellence the road always open to nobility, and honour; as many examples prove, in Spain and other places.

The term of BELLE ART correſponds likewiſe very well with painting on account of its productions, becauſe every painting ought to have beauty, without which it will always be defective.

The noble art of painting cannot be compared with any other thing better than poetry, having both the ſame end, to inſtruct by pleaſing.

Painting imitates all the appearances of the viſible objects of nature, not punctually as they are, but as they appear, or could or ought to appear. Its end being to inſtruct by pleaſing, it will not ſucceed by copying nature as it is, becauſe there will be the ſame, and alſo more difficulty to comprehend the productions of art than thoſe of nature; from whence its aim ought to be to give ideas of things produced by nature; and its works will be ſo much the more eſtimable, the more the idea is clear and perfect.

All that which art can produce, is already formed in nature, either entire or in part; and although art cannot arrive to imitate to perfection an object of compleat beauty, (which caſe is very rare) one may notwithſtanding ſay, that the art of painting is in general more compleat, and more beautiful than nature itſelf; becauſe it unites perfections which are naturally ſeperate, or depurates the objects of all that which is not eſſential to the choſen character or

the idea which we would with to give to the ſpectator. Beſides that, nature is ſo complicated in all her productions that we cannot comprehend the mode how ſhe produces them, nor eaſily diſtinguiſh her eſſential parts. To the contrary, painting with the aforeſaid conditions, gives a clear idea of things originally produced by nature, without fatiguing the underſtanding; which always occaſions delight, becauſe all that which moves the ſenſes and the intellect without faſtidiouſneſs, produces agreeable ſenſations; and for that reaſon, imitation delights more than its prototype. Then of courſe painting ought not to be a ſervile, but an ideal imitation; that is, it ought to imitate the parts of natural objects, in a manner, that they may give an idea of the being of a thing which we perceive; and that is done by expreſsing the viſible ſigns of the eſſential difference which there is between one object and another, be they of a very different nature, or almoſt ſimilar. Always when they make viſible this eſſential difference they give clear idea of their eſſence, and property, and take from the underſtanding the fatigue of comprehending them.

Alſo the painter as well as the poet ought to chooſe his ſubjects from things which offer in nature. Whether theſe exiſt or not they ought always to appear poſsible; and one ought never to employ the ſame beauty and perfection of a degree impoſsible, except in the perſons of ſuppoſed divinity, in whom is rendered poſsible

that which otherwiſe would not be ſo. Theſe beauties and perfections are commonly called IDEAL, becauſe they are not to be found in nature; from whence it ariſes, that many believe the Ideal not to be natural or true. Painting always has and ought to have much of the Ideal; to be underſtood however, that this is nothing more than a choice of the parts already exiſting in nature, which agree with the ſame idea, combined in a manner that they form an unity in a work of the art to attract the mind of him who views it, and to place it in that ſtate which the artiſt would wiſh. In this conſiſts the artifice of painters, and with that they make PICTORESQUE any natural object whatſoever, by giving it a diſpoſition capable of raiſing particular ſenſations in the minds of the ſpectators.

When a painting has the choice, imitation, and execution directed to the ſame idea, it will be always a good painting; to the contrary it will always be defective when it is deprived of theſe qualities. Notwithſtanding, it might be of better or inferior ſtyle according to the choice made by the author of the objects he propoſes to imitate.

All the parts united together which compoſe painting with regard to the practical part, or execution, form that which is called STYLE, which is properly the manner of being of the works of painting.

Theſe Styles are almoſt infinite, but the prin-

cipal ones however one may reduce to a certain number; which are the ſublime, the beautiful, the graceful, the ſignificant, and the natural; not making account of the vicious ſtyles, although I do not deſpiſe the authors of them, becauſe often great defects are found by the ſide of great merits; and by that we miſtake vices, by taking their defects for virtues.

DECIPIT EXAMPLAR VITIIS IMITABILE.

Horat:

With regard to ſuch ſtyles, I will explain myſelf as well as I am able, although the ſubject is ſuperior to my abilities; ſo that I ſhall be called audacious to prtend to undertake it; but I do it with the hope of giving at leaſt opportunity that others more able and more capable, may apply themſelves to explain theſe things better than me; and I ſhall be content in being diſapproved of, provided that others may ſay things more uſeful upon a point ſo important for painters and amateurs, to know how to diſtinguiſh the ſtyles, and eſteem thoſe moſt who juſtly merit it.

SUBLIME STYLE.

By ſublime, I mean the mode of treating the art agreeable to the execution of the ideas with which one would with to explain objects of a quality ſuperior to our nature. The artifice of that ſtyle conſiſts in knowing how to form an unity of ideas, poſsible and impoſsible,

in the ſame object; from whence it is neceſſary that the artiſt unites and employs known forms, and appearances, to make a whole which exiſts only in his imagination, and by the known parts which he will take from nature, he ought to make an abſtract of all the ſigns of their mechaniſm. MODE in all its parts ought to be ſimple, uniform, auſtere, or at leaſt ſolemn and grave.*

We have no examples of that ſtyle in the works of painting, thoſe being deficient of ancient Greece; therefore we ought to have recourſe to the ſtatues which have remained of them, among which the Pitius Apollo of the Vatican is that which moſt accoſts ſuch ſtyle; and muſt have been perfectly ſo that of the Jove, and the Minerva of Phidia at Elis, and at Athens. The great Raphael D'Urbino never arrived to the ſublime, although he reached the grand ſtyle. Michael Angelo produced only the terrible,† Although both approached the ſublime in their ideas and inventions, yet their forms

* Mengs meant by MODE the same as style, or manner of execution. By AUSTERE he meant to say that in the execution one has to give the form an air of simplicity; to the contours lines less curves or less waving than in the graceful subjects; and to the expression a character of majesty and greatness, rejecting every minutiæ and affectation.

† We have in another place explained GRAND style. TERRIBLE is used by way of Metaphor of that style which in composition chooses the posture most forced, and extraordinary and in executing the lines less soft; in the expression, the point most extreme, and in the colouring the tone less pleasing: it is the contrary to softness and grace; nor can any one deny that this style of Michael Angelo was not very excellent and very terrible.

were not coreſpondent; although the execution, particularly of Raphael, was very natural for that ſtyle. Hannibal Caracci by imitating of the forms of the ancient ſtatues approached it ſometimes, but without uniting the ſublimity of ideas with the ſtyle: the ſame might be ſaid of Domenico Zampieri.

Beautiful Style.

'Beauty is the idea or imagination of poſsible perfection.' Perfection never renders itſelf viſible without producing beauty; nor produces beauty without ſhowing the good quality or or perfection of the object in which it is found.

Beauty exalts our underſtanding to the knowledge of the good qualities of objects; which without that would have remained hidden, and difficult to comprehend. The ſtyle proper to expreſs ſuch objects ought to be elegant, and void of ſuperfluity; without wanting however, any part eſſential, and by diſtinguiſhing every thing according to its dignity, or moſt uſeful quality. Nevertheleſs, the execution ought to be individual, and ſofter than the ſublime ſtyle, yet in a manner ſufficient to give a clear idea of poſsible perfection.

Nor is leſs that ſtyle of beauty found perfect in the works of the moderns. If thoſe of Zeuxis had been preſerved, particularly his Helen, one might have been able perhaps to form a juſt idea of it. The Grecian ſtatues which remain are gene-

rally more or less of such a style, according as the character of each permits it, and although we have very many expressions of the passions, as in the Laocoon, they still discover beauty in the forms, although in a violent and altered state.

It appears that beauty changes its characters according to the subject in which it is found; thus we see it approaching to the sublime in the Apollo of the Vatican: in the Meleager one sees human and heroical beauty; In the Niobe, female beauty; in the Appollo and in the Venus of Medicis the beauty of graceful subjects. Very beautiful are the Castor and Pollux at Saint Ildefonso; the wrestling at Florence; the Gladiator of Borghese; and even the Pharnesian Hercules. All works differ in character, but nevertheless one knows that their authors never forget to unite them with beauty.

The ideas of Raphael are little superior to the objects which he saw in nature, nor are they very exquisite. Annibale was beautiful in the bodies of his men; Albano in the figures of his women; Guido Reni in the heads of the same, but more however in the forms; than the style.

GRACEFUL STYLE.

Grace is a word equivalent with benificence, from whence it arises, that the objects which appear graceful are those which by their appearance give an idea of that quality. In this style

the figures ought to have the motions moderate, eaſy, lovely, and more humble than arrogant. The execution ought not to be treated with much force, and ought to be alſo eaſy, ſoft, and varied, and without minutiæ.

This was the part which the Grecians confeſs to have been poſſeſſed in a ſuperior degree by Appelles; and although that artiſt was very modeſt, ſtill he gloried in poſſeſsing it; ſaying with ingenuity, that others ſurpaſſed him in ſome parts but that he conquered in grace. The idea which the ancients had of grace was very different from that which we have of it; becauſe in compariſon with theirs, ours is a kind of affectation which cannot ſubſiſt in perfect beauty without embarraſsing it; conſiſting in certain geſtures, actions, and difficult poſtures, unnatural, or violent, or at leaſt like thoſe of children, as we ſee ſometimes, in great Correggio himſelf, and more in Parmigianino, and in others who have followed that track. In the ancients there was not that grace; it was a character to give the ſame idea of beauty which beauty gives of perfection, by preſenting the pleaſing parts of beautiful objects. The moſt beautiful Grecian examples of that ſtyle, are the Venus of Medicis, the Apollo, the Hermaphrodite of the villa of Borgheſe, and that which remains antique of the beautiful Cupid of the ſame villa; as alſo a Nymph in the collection of San Ildefonſo, and in various other ſtatues. Raphael poſſeſſed true Grace in the motions of figures; he wanted however a certain elegance in the

forms and contours, and his execution is in general too powerful and determinate.* Correggio may ſerve as an example in the contours, clare obſcure, and in all that which is comprehended under the term of execution. He poſſeſſed in an eminent degree, that part of which Appelles ſo much gloried when he praiſed Protogenes, ſaying that he was equal to him in every thing, but that he did not know how to take his hand off from a work; meaning that too much labour, and too much poliſh, takes from the grace of works, and are contrary to that ſtyle.

Significant and Expressive Style.

Significant ſtyle is that which has expreſsion for its principal end. Its execution requires determination, and concluſion.

Raphael may ſerve in that as a perfect example, being never in that part ſurpaſſed by any one. The ancient Grecians prefered beauty to expreſsion, ſo much ſo, that they endeavoured not to brutalize the forms by alterations which

* Determinate execution ſignifies that which marks things to a certain point, and leaves the reſt for imagination. The ſpectator as well as the reader likes to have ſomething left for ſuppoſition, and to ſuppoſe and find out of himſelf: from whence the author who exhauſts on all ſides his matter, diſguſts the reader by mortifying his ſelf-love, becauſe he ſuppoſes him incapable of ſearching the conſequences of himſelf; and a painter who marks things, and above all the expreſſion, with too much force, cauſes the ſame effect and prejudice to beauty. Every extreme is vicious; but the greateſt difficulty is to know how to chooſe and maintain the medium.

are generally occaſioned by the effects of violent affections.

Among the moderns no one has known how to give ſuch taſte to expreſsion as Raphael; who appears as if he had drawn the perſons themſelves which he repreſented. Others, alſo of the greateſt ability, appear as if they had drawn Commedians, who feign the paſsions they repreſent, and who repreſent the actions for the ſpectators, and not becauſe they felt the effects themſelves; ſo that it is an affectation, and not the internal ſentiment of the perſon. Some profeſsors of merit have ſhown grace only by ſome particular actions, and others not even this part, having made all their compoſitions cold, and inanimate. Raphael to the contrary is expreſsive in all caſes, and his execution correſponds in all the parts his ſtyle requires, as I ſhall explain in the deſcription of his paintings.

NATURAL STYLE.

Although painting ought to give an idea of things natural, I diſtinguiſh however under that term of natural ſtyle, thoſe woks in which Artiſts propoſe no other end but the ſame, without chooſing or improving the moſt exquiſite of nature itſelf, and that is underſtood when one ſpeaks of Naturaliſts in painting; which denomination ſignifies that ſuch artiſts have not known the art of improving their originals, or of chooſing the beſt of Nature; contenting them-

ſelves only with having known how to copy it as the occaſion has repreſented, or as they have generally found it.

It appears to me that one might compare this ſtyle of painting to the ſtyle of comic poetry, which uſes the artifice of poeſy, without employing poetical ideas. In this ſtyle have excellently ſucceeded ſome Dutch and Flemings, ſuch as Rembrant, Gerard Dau, Teniers, and others; but the beſt examples of that ſtyle are the works of James Velaſquez; and if Titian is ſuperior to him in colouring, the Spaniard ſurpaſſed the Venetian by much in the knowledge of light and ſhade, as alſo in aerial perſpective, which are the moſt neceſſary parts in that ſtyle, becauſe by their means it gives an idea of truth, natural objects not being able to ſubſiſt without having relief and diſtance between them, and may be of the moſt beautiful or moſt ordinary colouring. Whoever would with of this kind any thing more than is to be found in the works of Velaſquez, can only find it in nature itſelf; but he will find the moſt neceſſary parts in that author.

It will be eaſy to find that which correſponds with any ſtyle, when one conſiders, that the parts of imitation ought to be conſiſtent with the firſt idea propoſed by the artiſt; for which reaſon I ſhall paſs under ſilence different other ſtyles, more or leſs perfect, which refer to the one or the other before mentioned.

I fear I ſhall diſguſt too much a great number of Amateurs held as intelligent men, by

ſpeaking of the vicious ſtyles, admired much by him who has not a taſte ſo delicate as to diſcern the true excellence of great men, and takes a mere appearance for true merit; but theſe are much deceived, like many other admirers of Michael Angelo who take the loaded ſtyle for the true greatneſs of that maſter.

The affectation of ſome Lombardian painters appear as graceful to them as that of Correggio, and the ſame happens of all the affected ſtyles, which many praiſe, as if they were of the beſt taſte; in the mean time it is not at the moſt but an augmentation of accidental things, with which they arrive to give ſome idea to him who is capable of knowing the objects of nature by the parts or principal ſigns. The means adopted by artiſts of that ſtyle in giving pleaſure to Amateurs, is to augment the beauty of the local tints of all the bodies, and of their variety; the force and contrapoſition of the clare obſcure, and the chimerical diſpoſition of the maſſes of light and ſhade where one cannot find it natural; ſo that ſuch works are executed more for the eye than the reaſon. Many have practiced this ſtyle who are held as great men, particularly out of Italy, whoſe names I reſpect for their merits in other parts of the art, ſuch as in the fertility and abundance of their genius, and in the ſuperior talent with which they have known how to conquer and deſpiſe the greateſt difficulties, and to content themſelves with the value of ſome parts more eaſy, without regarding the cenſure of intelligent men.

Easy Style.

Some profeſſors have followed a ſtyle ſufficiently eaſy, and of much facility, without being totally vicious; ſuch as Peter of Cortona and his School, in which was diſtinguiſhed Lucas Giordano his diſciple. Thoſe may be called painters of the eaſy, common, and popular ſtyles, and who have not inveſtigated perfection; contenting themſelves to give in all the parts of the art, a ſufficient idea to diſtinguiſh one thing from another, without, regarding their perfection; ſo that theſe moſt celebrated Artiſts have no other mode of ſtudy in their works, but ſuch as is ſufficient to make themſelves underſtood by vulgar amateurs, with very little ſtudy or application.

That which reſpects the practice of painting, comprehends five principal parts, which are deſign, clare obſcure, colouring, invention, and compoſition. In all works occur principally and abſolutely the three firſt; and all that which one makes in theſe parts one might prove if it be done well, or ill. It is not thus in the other two, which are much more arbitrary, and although they ought to be guided by reaſon, they avail notwithſtanding ſomething of opinions: from whence ariſes the difficulty of finding fixed rules to content every one; and ſince invention and compoſition regulate all the parts of choice, every one chooſes differently, and approves what he has choſen according to his genius.

DESIGN.

To enter into a deſcripton of all the parts which deſign requires, would be a work very long, and not proper to this place. I ſhall only ſay that its perfection conſiſts in the corrections; that is, in the exact imitations of all the forms and manners in which they preſent themſelves to our ſight, and in knowing how to give them their correſpondent character; chooſing from nature that which agrees with the ſubject and object.

CLARE OBSCURE.

The Beauty of Clare obſcure conſiſts in knowing how to imitate all the effects of light and ſhade in nature, and in giving to works, force, ſweetneſs, degradation, variety, and repoſe for the ſight, as well in the light as ſhade; and finally in making the Clare obſcure ſerve to expreſs the character of a work ſomewhat cheerful or grave.

COLOURING.

The beauty of colouring requires a juſt imitation of local colours,* or of tones of colours of which any thing is tinted. This tone ought to

* LOCAL COLOUR, is the proper and natural colour of things which one diſtinguiſhes among them.

be the ſame in the lights as in the ſhades and half tints, ſo that each colour or tint goes decreaſing according to its want of light, or the interpoſition of the air between the objects and our ſight. Finally, a colour ought to receive all the accidents which one ſees in nature, ſo as to produce a beautiful, lucid, rich, powerful, and ſoft colouring.

Invention.

Invention is the moſt exact part of painting, and the moſt natural to explain the talent of an artiſt. It is the poetry of painting. It is the firſt idea of a work, and the painter ought never to loſe ſight of it even in the laſt ſtroke of the pencil. It is not ſufficient that he forms good ideas, and that he fills a large canvaſs with many figures, if all theſe ſerve not to explain the principal object, and if all the complexion of the work does not expreſs and declare to ſpectators the ſubject of which one treats, preparing and diſpoſing the underſtanding of him who views the painting, by being mixed with the expreſsions and particular actions of the principal figures; without which it would avail nothing to give violent expreſsions and altered motions like thoſe who wiſh to appear inventors. Exceſs is the thing moſt contrary to good invention. To give an idea of that part, I ſhall deſcribe among a few, the painting of the Spassimo di Sicilia, when I treat of the Paintings of the Royal Palace.

COMPOSITION.

By compoſition in painting,* one ought to underſtand the art of uniting with a good method, the objects which are choſen by means of invention. Theſe two parts ought always to be united: becauſe the beſt thoughts, and the moſt beautiful inventions would be diſagreeable without good compoſition. The beauty of that part depends principally upon the variety, contrapoſition, contraſt,* and on the diſpoſition of all the component parts of a work. With all that, invention has to regulate all the parts of the compoſition, to aſſign the quantity more or leſs which ought to enter into the painting, and the motive, or property of that which compoſes it.

Painting has been ſubject to changes, which all human things ſuffer; it has had its progreſs and decay; it returns to elevate itſelf to a certain degree, and then goes declining anew. It has not only experienced theſe changes, but has varied alſo in its fundamental reaſons; becauſe that which in one time has been its principal end, in another has been regarded as a part ſcarcely neceſſary.

* CONTRAST in painting, means a well diſtributed variety of all the parts. It is the contrary to repetition. If in a group of three figures, for example, one ſhows itſelf by the front, another by the back, and the other by the ſide, they will have good contraſt. Each figure, and each member ought to contraſt with others of its group, and each group with others of the painting. There is contraſt even in colours.

I give for ſuppoſition, that in no nation had painting exiſted, in a form of the art, before that of Greece, and that no others had exalted it to ſo high a degree of perfection as them. Theſe genius's cultivated it with other reaſons, and with a ſtyle different from the moderns, although the imitation of nature has been always the principal end of all.

The ancients regarded beauty ſo much, that only the beautiful part of nature appeared to them worthy of imitation; ſo that one may be aſſured it has been thoſe who have formed and maintained the ſtyle of beauty. The vaſt attention which the greateſt artiſts paid to the perfection of that part, was retained in the thoughts of thoſe grand compoſitions of which the modern authors are ſo proud. In fact, the moſt celebrated paintings of Polignotus, Zeuxis, Parraſius, and Apelles were of few figures.

Their inventions, although ingenius, were not abundant in objects, and from thoſe which remain, we may conjecture, that their moſt copious compoſitions explained more the particular excellence of each figure, than the unity of the whole. One may yet adduce another reaſon by which the ancient painters filled not their paintings full of figures; which is, that a beautiful and perfect object requires ſpace to ſhow itſelf to advantage, it being certain that many objects weaken the enjoyment of the principal perfection.

When the Grecian painters advanced their art ſo much as to merit the attention of philoſo-

phers, they aimed to ſeek excellence in the imitation of nature; but of perfect nature; from whence they did not exact ſo much a number of objects, as their perfection. In this manner they advanced the art by degrees from the fifteenth Olympiad to the nineteenth, in which time they found the greateſt ſubtilty, nor remained any thing to add except that grace, which, as I have ſaid, is not naturally perfection, or beauty, but gives the idea of the laſt, by repreſenting it to the mind in that ſtate of repoſe* which facilitates the comprehenſion of him who views it. This part was reſerved for the great Apelles, who flouriſhed in the 112th Olympiad. He beſtowed on the art all its completion, perfecting all that which his predeceſſors had invented; and all thoſe who came after him, wiſhing to proceed otherwiſe, fell into uſeleſs novelty, minutiæ, brilliancy of colours and caprices.

When painting returned almoſt to its firſt being in the 14th century, the world was found in great ignorance, and with little philoſophy, ſo that the firſt painters were employed to paint images without having any regard to beauty or perfection.

*. The sight finds quiet and REPOSE in a work when there is no confusion in it, and when the colours and clare obscure are well understood, and gradated in a manner that the eyes and the understanding can comprehend the idea of the painter with ease, and without fatigue. A painting where the author exhausts all his subject, and loads it too much with objects, or where by studying variety, he has ill understood the collocation of the colours, will cause an effect contrary to that repose of which we speak. The LOGGE, improperly called of RAPHAEL, is a good example of confusion, because there is too much of every thing in it.

In Italy, where it was principally renewed, they painted entire façades for churches, chapels, and church-yards, repreſenting myſteries of the paſsion of Our Lord, and of other ſimilar things; from whence, even from the beginning, the art inclined to a ſtate of abundance and ſuperfluity, rather than perfection; and even till now the ſyſtem is not changed, as painting ſerves to content the vulgarity of riches and power, more than philoſophy and good taſte; quite the contrary to that which happened among the Grecians. Thus it follows, that painters ſeek not perfection, but abundance and facility, becauſe perfection is but for few, and the reſt is attainable to all, even to the moſt ignorant, who at preſent are the legiſlators of taſte.

Since nothing in this world is conſtant, and men are extravagant in their ideas, by exalting that which is low, and abaſing that which is high, painters could not do leſs than ſeek new modes to ſurpaſs one another, and, by that, they have proceeded by adding ſome theorical parts to that barbarous practice in which they began.

The firſt part they found was perſpective, by the knowledge of which, and that of foreſhortning, they put themſelves in a ſtate to advance more their inventions.

Domenico Ghirlandajo, of Florence, was the firſt, who, by means of that part, improved the mode of compoſition, and placing the figures in groups, and diſtinguiſhing the drapery by juſt gradations, he gave profundity to his com-

ſitions. In ſpight of all that, he did not dare to dilate his compoſitions as his ſucceſſors have practiſed.

Towards the end of the 14th century were born ſome men of ſuperior talents, ſuch as Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Giorgione, Titian, Father Bartholemy of ſaint Mark, and Raphael. Leonard found much ſubtilty; Michael Angelo with the ſtudy of the ancient fragments, and with the knowledge of anatomy enlarged the ſtyle of deſign, with the forms. Giorgione of Caſtlefranco enlarged it alſo in general, and in particular gave to colouring the greateſt vivacity, which his predeceſſors had not done. Titian with a more ſubtile imitation of nature, found perfection in the tones of colouring. Father Bartholemy, making drapery his particular ſtudy, found the mode of dreſsing well the figures, following the relief of the naked by means of clare obſcure. Raphael. endowed with a more natural, and determinate talent for painting, ſtudied his predeceſſors and contemporaries, and appropriating the moſt excellent of all; according to the conveniency of expreſsing the truth of nature, he formed a ſtyle the moſt perfect and univerſal of all the modern painters who have been before or after him; and if he were excellent in all the parts of the art, he was incomparably more ſo in compoſition and invention; and I believe it would have ſurprited the Grecians themſelves if they had ſeen the great works of the Vatican, where unite abundance,

and ſo much perfection, with ſtudy, elegance and eaſe.

As among the Grecians painting had acquired the higheſt perfection by means of Zeuxis, and Paraſius, and that the great Apelles, as I have ſaid, had only to add grace, apparently, alſo, among the moderns, nothing was deficient in painting after Raphael, except that Grace which Anthony Allegri added, who accompliſhed all that which the ſtyle of modern painting could deſire; ſurpriſing the underſtanding of the intelligent, and the ſight of every one.

After theſe great painters there was an interval, until the Caracci's of Bologna, ſtudying the works of their predeceſſors, and principally thoſe of Correggio, formed a new School, and became the firſt, and moſt happy among the Imitators. Hannibal was the moſt correct imitator, and reunited the ſtyle of the ancient ſtatues with the grandeur of Lewis, but he diſpiſed the ſubtilty of the art, and philoſophical reflections. From theſe Caracci's, was formed a ſchool of many able men, and all followed the ſame track, except Guido Reni, who had a great talent and much eaſe, and introduced in painting a pleaſing ſtyle, compoſed of beauty, grace, richneſs and eaſe. Guercino of Cento, was inventor of another particular ſtyle of clare obſcure, which was compoſed of ſpots, contrapoſition, variety, and of interruptions of all the clare obſcure.

After theſe great men, who imitated with much eaſe the appearance of the perfection of the firſt, and of nature, came Peter of Cortona who

found yet too much difficulty to accomodate himself to these styles, and possessing a great natural talent, he applied himself principally to the part of composition, and to that which is called TASTE. Until this time, all compositions had had a kind of symmetry, or be it disposition, regulated according as the equilibrium, and invention of the history required; but Peter of Cortona almost separated the invention of the composition, valuing much more of those parts which delight the sight; as are the contraposítions and contrasts of the members of the figures, so that then was introduced the custom of filling paintings with a croud of figures, well distributed, without thinking whether they suited the history or not; which is diametrically opposite to the practice of the ancient Greeks, who used to employ few figures, in order that their perfection might be more visible: those of the school of Cortona, to the contrary, used many figures in order that their imperfections should not be so palpable. Of this last school, there are very many of the same sentiments, which have changed the character of painting.

A little after came Carlo Maratti, who, aspiring to perfection, sought it in the works of other painters and particularly in those of the Caracci's. Although he applied all his study to be natural, one knows by himself that he was in the preoccupation of not following his own simplicity. This maxim he extended to all the parts of the art; and, with that, has given to his school, (which has been the last

at Rome,) a certain ſtyle of nicety and affectation.

France alſo has had ſome great men, particularly in compoſition, in which Nicholas Pouſin was, after Raphael, him who moſt imitated the ſtyle of the ancient Greeks. Charles le Brun was abundant: different other Frenchmen were men of merit; and whilſt their ſchool did not depart from the Italian maxims, it produced many good profeſſors, who remained famous in many parts of the art; but there ſoon appeared ſome, who, preferring the magnificent works of Rubens which were exiſting at Paris, to the perfect works of Raphael, imitated in part the pleaſing objects which nature offered in France, with the maxims of Rubens, and they formed a ſtyle which pleaſes for novelty and brilliancy, to which that nation is inclined, and abandoned the Italian taſte, forming a national ſtyle, in which, what they call ESPRIT makes the eſſential part. From that time they no longer painted either Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, or Barbarians as Pouſsin had done, but always Frenchmen; and thus they pretended to expreſs by them the characters of any other nations.

That which I have thought of the other ſchools you may draw from the deſcription which I ſhall give of the works of their beſt artiſts.

Although the little I have ſaid will not be ſufficient to give a compleat idea of the art, yet I fear that to you it will appear too long for the ſhort deſcription which I ſhall give of the paintings of his Majeſty.

I would wiſh that in that Royal Palace could be found the account of all the other valuable paintings which are in the other Royal ſeats, and that they were diſpoſed in a gallery, worthy of ſo great a monarch, to be able well or ill to form a diſcourſe that from the moſt ancient painters which we have any account of, one might guide the underſtanding of the curious even to the laſt who have merited any praiſe: I could then make comprehenſible the eſſential difference which paſſes between them, and I could give by that more clearneſs to the ideas; but the court not having ever thought of forming a ſeries of painting, I ſhall ſpeak unconnectedly of the artiſts of different times, beginning by the beſt Spaniſh authors, whoſe works are placed in the principal rooms of that Royal Palace.

DESCRIPTION

OF THE

PRINCIPAL PAINTINGS

OF THE

ROYAL PALACE

AT

MADRID.

IN the hall where the King dreſſes, are placed the major part of the ſaid paintings; particularly of the three authors, James Velaſquez, Ribera, and Morillo. But what difference between them! what knowledge and truth of clare obſcure do we not find in Velaſquez! how well he underſtood the effect which the air has when interpoſed between the objects, to make appear diſtant the one from the other! and what ſtudy for any profeſſor who would wiſh to conſider the paintings of that author exiſting in

the ſaid hall,(executed at three different times,) and the manner which ſhows the way held by him to arive to ſuch excellence in the imitation of nature! The painting of the AGUADOR of Seville, ſhows, how much painters ſubjected themſelves in the beginning to natural imitation; by finiſhing all the parts, and giving them that force which appears as if one ſaw the model, conſidering the eſſential difference which there is between the parts illuminated, and ſhade, ſo that that ſame imitation of the natural ſtyle made them give into that which was a little harſh and dry.

In the painting of the falſe Bacchus, who crowns ſome drunkards, one ſees a ſtyle more open and free, becauſe it imitates truth, not as it is, but as it appears. Yet one obſerves a great eaſe and dexterity in the forge of Vulcan, where ſome of the ſmiths are a perfect imitation of nature. But where, without doubt, he gave a juſt idea of the ſame nature, is, in the painting of the Spinners, which is in his higheſt ſtyle, and done in a manner which appears not to have received any part from execution, but only from deſire; in this ſtyle it is a ſingular work. Beſides theſe paintings, there are ſome portraits of Velaſquez of the ſame ſtyle, which were the moſt beautiful he ever did.

Ribera is admirable in the imitation of nature, in the clare obſcure, in the touch of the pencil, and in ſhewing the accidents of the body, the wrinkles, the hair of the body, &c. His ſtyle is always powerful, but does not equal Velaſquez in the knowledge of light and ſhade,

being deficient in the gradations and ambient air; although in the colouring he is more forcible and brilliant, as the paintings of the Sopraportes plainly shew.

Of Morillo, there are paintings in that chamber of two different ſtyles. The firſt are the Incarnation, and the Nativity of Our Lord, which, eſpecially the ſecond, are painted in a maſterly ſtyle, and with a force conformable to nature, although they were done before he acquired that ſweetneſs which characteriſes his ſecond ſtyle, as one diſcovers in other paintings of that chamber, and namely in the little one of the marriage of the Virgin Mary, and in a moſt beautiful half figure of Saint James, placed in a contiguous anti-chamber.

In the converſation room of the King, there is an excellent work of Velaſquez which repreſents the Infanta Donna Margarita Maria of Auſtria, when the aforeſaid Velaſquez drew her, but that work being ſo famous for its excellence, I will not ſay more than that it can convince that the effect occaſioned by the imitation of nature, is that which ſerves to content every claſs of people, above all, where one makes not the principal account of beauty.

For the preſent, I will refrain from ſpeaking of the many excellent paintings of Titian, diſperſed through every part of the palace, to ſay ſomething of the ſuperb portrait of Velaſquez, in which he repreſented Philip IV. on horſeback, in an admirable ſtyle, as well for the figure of the King, as the horſe, and the field itſelf, is

touched* with the greateſt taſte, but above all is ſingular the eaſy and determinate ſtyle with which the head of the king is painted, and which ſeems to brighten the ſkin; and all, even to the hair, which is moſt beautiful, is executed with the greateſt legerity. By the ſide of that painting is another of the Count Duke of Olivarez ſcarce any thing inferior to that of the King aforeſaid.

We now proceed to obſerve the moſt beautiful painting of the ſame author, repreſenting the Surrender of a Fort, which painting was originally placed in the RETIRO of the chamber of kingdoms, and is now in the chamber where the Prince of Aſturias dines. This painting contains all the perfection of which the ſubject was capable, nor is there a thing, except the ſpear and the lance, which is not expreſſed with the greateſt majeſty. In the ſame chamber is the portrait of the Infanta Donna Margarita Maria, and that of an Infant on horſeback, both executed by Velaſquez in his beſt ſtyle, with other portraits from his hand, which likewiſe here placed.

In the dreſsing chamber of the Prince, are

* Touch in terms of painting, ſignifies the managing the pencil and colours. Every object one ſuppoſes to ſee at a certain diſtance, of courſe ought to loſe the minutiæ which one ſees when near. The hair, for example, one cannot ſee or repreſent divided as it is, and for that reaſon painters repreſent it in a maſs. This maſs is to be done in a certain manner which depends upon its ſtyle and election. From whence we ſay that a painter TOUCHES in ſuch, or ſuch a ſtyle. In ſhort this diſtinguiſhes the powerful ſoft, eaſy, delicate, grand touch, &c.

three beautiful paintings of Ribera, one of Saint Jerom, and a fellow of Saint Benedict, painted in his moſt clear ſtyle, in which one ſees the moſt beautiful touches of the pencil, the moſt exact imitation of nature, and of an expreſſion not general in the face of Saint Benedict. The other, repreſenting the Martyrdom of a Saint, is alſo excellent, although of a ſtyle more powerful.

It would be ſuperfluous to ſpeak of all the paintings of Rubens, and his ſchool, which are in ſo great a number in that palace. One, however, is remarkable, which repreſents the adoration of Kings; a work truly of the firſt claſs among thoſe of that author. He painted it in Flanders, after his beſt ſtyle, and when he came to Spain, he added more canvaſs, in order to make the painting larger, and to augment the figures, among which he did his own portrait. This painting has all the beauty of which its author was capable in hiſtorical ſubjects, and the deſign has fewer retouches than the others.

Among the different paintings of Vandyke, there is one very beautiful, which repreſents Chriſt in the Garden, painted with great taſte, and good colouring, as far as the ſubject permitted it in a ſcene by night. The portrait, of half figure, of the Cardinal Infant, is likewiſe excellent for its truth and colouring; and for being of a touch the moſt eaſy, ſoft, and limpid.

The paintings of Lucas Giordano are almoſt infinite, and one might ſay that he has never made a thing abſolutely bad, becauſe one

always finds in his works a certain taſte, but after the manner of an embryo of the excellent things done by celebrated men in the ſchools of Italy. He never arrived to perfection in any thing; from whence it ariſes that his ſtyle has not been able to ſuffer any diminution without falling into the moſt ordinary ſtyle of painting; it was formed in that degree which he wiſhed to follow. The works of Lucas Giordano, are, generally ſpeaking, of two kinds, although he made them various by imitating one and another particular painter. Some of his paintings are of a powerful colour, imitating ſomething Ribera, of whom he learnt the profeſſion in his firſt years, but his more general ſtyle, and moſt natural to his character, which one obſerves in his beſt works, is that which he took from Peter of Cortona. After this ſtyle is the ſuperb work in freſco of the CASONE DEL RITIRO, and many other paintings in the palace; but in other works which he did at Madrid, he fell off ſomething from that ſtyle, by mixing dreſſed figures in his works, after the manner of Paolo Veroneſe, and, painting with more feeble tints, and much clare obſcure, with that he formed a ſtyle more heavy, as one may ſee in ſome Hiſtories of Solomon, which are in that Palace, done after he painted the work of the Eſcurial.

Among other paintings of the ſame Palace, there is one of a Madonna of half figure, with the child and Saint John, which to ſome appears of Raphael: in fact the child is almoſt all taken from that author; the fleſh of the figures is rather red; the field and the country incline to blue: the robe

of the madonna is of a carmine colour, rather clear, and the mantle is of a dark blue; all things characteriſtic of Raphael; and by that, he, who does not know the eſſential beauty of that author, may be deceived by the imitation of Giordano. Other paintings of his in the ſame palace, imitate the Venetian ſtyle; not however to that perfection which ſome ſuppoſe.

One might reckon as works of great conſideration ſome paintings of Tintoretto, of the Old Palma, and of James of Baſſano, but all, in my opinion, are eclipſed by that of Paolo Veroneſe, and more eſpecially by ſome of Titian of his beſt ſtyle; great painters, who were never ſurpaſſed, nor even equalled by any in the knowledge and perfection of colouring. There is ſuch an excellence in their works in this part of painting, that in no manner can one diſcover their artifice; the whole appearing as pure and native truth. Titian was wonderfully eaſy in the touch of the pencil, nor ever negligent; even his touches are well deſigned. The effect and the force of the clare obſcure in his paintings, does not conſiſt on the obſcurity of the mafle, or in the clearneſs of the lights, but in the diſpoſal of the local colours.

All the aforeſaid qualities one may ſee executed in the moſt beautiful Bacchanal, whoſe figures are a third part of the ſize of nature. This painting is at preſent preſerved in the chamber of the Princeſs. Each part in particular, and the whole together, are ſo beautiful, that it would require a length of time to de-

ſcribe them. I can only ſay that I never paſs before that painting, without remaining aſtoniſhed with admiration at that ſleeping female placed in the firſt ſtage, occaſioning in me as much novelty as if I had never ſeen it before. The colouring of that figure is the moſt clear that Titian ever uſed; the degradation of the tints is ſo wonderful, that I have never ſeen a thing of the kind ſo beautiful in the world; nor does one diſtinguiſh them but by comparing with great attention the one with the others, each ſingly appears as living fleſh, and the infinite variety of the whole is ſubject to the idea of one tone only. In each of the figures, the local tints of the fleſh is varied with the greateſt propriety, and even the drapery is beautiful of colours. Paſſing to the acceſſory parts, the ſky with clear clouds, the green trees of various ſhades, the fields covered with herbs, and the whole together have vivacity without ever departing from the perfect imitation of nature.

The painting, almoſt of the ſame ſize, which repreſents a feaſt of a great number of children at play with fruits, which they had gathered from the trees, is alſo of the greateſt beauty, of a very finiſhed ſtyle, and appears done almoſt at the ſame time of the other. It is wonderful to ſee ſo much diverſity in the infants, and in their hair which is almoſt all black and curled, but above all is the great artifice of the degradation of the tints, and the finiſh which loſes itſelf by little and little in the more diſtant objects.

Theſe two paintings were in Rome in the

houſe of Lodoviſi, and were made a preſent of to the king of Spain. The ſame according to Sandrart ſerved as a ſtudy to learn how to make the beautiful children of Dominichino, Pouſsin, and of the Fleming. Albano availed himſelf of it in his painting of a little group of theſe children, who are dancing. In the Palace are two copies which Rubens did of that painting, but one might conſider them as a book tranſlated into the Flemiſh language, which conſerves all the thoughts, but loſes all the grace of the original.

There are many other paintings of the ſame Titian, all however done afterwards, and ſome in his old age, when from decayed ſight he neglected the clearneſs of his pencil, yet always preſerving the excellence of the tints. Notwithſtanding, it has cauſed much injury to painting that Titian has left ſo many works of this claſs executed with negligence; becauſe many painters have imitated that mode without recollecting that Titian had known how to paint more finiſhed, and made firſt a great ſtudy in all the beautiful principles and fundaments of the art, although he was ſuperior in colouring, which he ſurpaſſed every one.

There are but few paintings which we can enumerate of Correggio, but every thing painted by that great man has all the enchantment of the art. Although there are only two of them here, they are enough to give a ſufficient idea of the greatneſs of that artiſt. The Madonna who dreſſes the Child, with Saint

Joſeph at a diſtance, appear done after the manner of a ſketch, by the many eſſential variations which one diſcovers done by the author in the poſtures of the Child and the Madonna. It is ſurpriſing that a minor figure of two palms ſhould have ſuch effect at any conſiderable diſtance, appearing that it exceeds its meaſure; this however does not ariſe ſo much from the force of the clare obſcure, as from the imperceptible half-tints, which paſs from the light to the ſhade and from the ſingular artifice of treating one with the other, with which they expreſs in ſuch a manner the relief and the form that it gives almoſt a contradiction to its being a plain ſurface.

If Titian was ſingular in the tints and local colouring of any thing he repreſented, Correggio, although leſs perfect in that part, ſurpaſſed him infinitely in particular relief, in the ENTRATE AND USCITE of each body and of it's parts, as alſo in the artifice of æerial perſpective not only regarding the objects diminiſhed by clare or obſcure in the interpoſed diſtance, but alſo by certain knowledge of the nature of the air, which being matter, more or leſs tranſparent, is filled with light, and paſsing through the bodies communicates it to the ſame in thoſe parts where the rays of light could not paſs direct, and thus formed that ambiency which diſtinguiſhes objects even in the ſhade, and makes one comprehend the diſtance which there is between the one and the other. This part was perfectly underſtood

by the ancient Greeks, as one may obſerve in the paintings of Herculaneum, even in the moſt ordinary; from whence one knows it to have been at that time a precept of the ſchool. Among the moderns, the moſt celebrated in that point were Correggio, Velaſquez, and Rembrant.

Returning to our painting, the Child is a moſt perfect thing, not only from the knowledge of the clare obſcure, but alſo for the colouring, impaſting, deſign, and the higheſt grace. Correggio intended to produce wonders in the foreſhortening, and to make it that theſe contours ſhould arife in the ſame form of the body; a thing extremely difficult, and executed only in an equal degree by Michael Angelo, and Raphael. The Grecians conſidered this as the moſt difficult part of Painting, as Pliny refers in Lib. XXXV. Cap. 10. ſpeaking of Parrhaſius in theſe terms; "Becauſe to paint bodies, and that which is "within them, although it is certainly a great "thing, yet many have ſucceeded in it; but to "make the contours, and terminate the things "which they comprehend, is a merit which few "painters have had, becauſe the laſt lines ought "to be made in a manner that they appear to em-"brace and enfold things, ſhowing the ro-"tundency of them, and that they extend fur-"ther than the eye can diſtinguiſh."

The other painting, which repreſents the Prayer of our Lord in the Garden, is alſo ſmall, but a compleat and ſtudied work. At firſt ſight, one diſtinguiſhes only Chriſt with the Angels,

by the air of their brightneſs, all the reſt remaining in nocturnal ſhade; then conſidering it well, one finds divinely expreſſed the ambient, and the degradations which natural objects make when ſeen by little light; ſo that we know the near objects, whilſt the diſtant ones are not diſcoverable to our ſight. One ſcarcely diſtinguiſhes the men who are going to ſeize our Lord, nor is there a touch, or ſenſible ſtroke of the pencil in the trees, until where the apoſtles are; but according as one advances the things more to the light, one begins to diſtinguiſh the foliage, herbs, a trunk with the crown of thorns, and the croſs on the ground.

The ſplendor of the face of Chriſt, illuminates all the painting; but the ſame Saviour receives the light from above, as it from Heaven, reflecting it to the angels, who receive it from him. This idea, which is very natural and beautiful, is executed with that perfection of which its author only was capable. At preſent theſe paintings are in the ſame cabinet of the Princeſs, where are alſo the aforeſaid of Titian. Here are alſo ſome things of Leonardo da Vinci. Of his beſt ſtyle is one painting which repreſents two children playing with a lamb, not very well executed, and another which carries the ſole head of the young ſaint John. In theſe paintings, one ſees the great ſtudy which the author makes upon light and ſhade, that is, upon that degradation which there is from the greateſt light to the greateſt obſcurity, obſerving alſo certain

graceful, and laughing geſtures, which appear to have opened the way to Correggio to arrive to that grace which one ſees in his works.*

One finds alſo in this cabinet ſome paintings ſuppoſed to be of Raphael. Of his invention there is a Holy family with figures half the ſize of nature, and it appears done from his deſign by one of his firſt Diſciples. There is another little painting of Madonna of half figure, with the child, of the ſame compoſition of the famous painting at Florence, known under the name of MADONNA DELLA SEGGIOLA, with the difference that in the one of which we ſpeak, does not appear St. John, and it is of a ſquare form, in the mean time the other is rotund, with figures almoſt as large as nature. This little painting of the Palace appears to have been in part repainted by the ſame Raphael, but more after the mode of a ſketch than a finiſhed work. The head of Madonna in particular, is all his, and is full of life and expreſſion; it is, finally, equal to any other of his beſt works.

But how ſhall I explain myſelf ſufficiently and in a manner moſt worthy of the beautiful painting known by the name of the SPASIMO DI SICILIA? you know that Raphael painted it at Rome to ſend it to Sicily, to be placed in the Church of MADONNA DELLO SPASIMO. This work, according to Vaſari, was loſt in the ſea, but was recovered without receiving any damage.

* Among the paintings which paſſed from Modena to the Gallery of Dresden, there is one of Correggio, which repreſents the Madonna, whoſe head is very ſimilar to the ſtyle of Leonard.

In all ages it has been much admired by truly intelligent men: Agoſtino of Venice engraved it, however without giving an idea of its beauty. The Count Malvaſia ſpeaks of it in diſpraiſe; but his ſame writings ſhows him of little judgment in the excellence of paintings, and he conſides in the relation of ſome painters, perhaps thoſe, who by their great inferiority to Raphael, could not diſcern the merit of that great man, nor the true reaſons for which they ought to value the works of famous artiſts.

It appears to me indubitable, that the part moſt noble in painting is not that which ſolely delights the ſight, and renders a work pleaſing to men who are in fact ignorant of the art, but that thoſe parts are the moſt valuable which ſatisfy the underſtanding, and content thoſe who know how to make uſe of the faculties of the mind. It being thus, (of which I am perſuaded) Raphael is without doubt the greateſt painter among all thoſe whoſe works have been preſerved to our time. The inventions and conceptions of his paintings, give at firſt ſight an idea of that which he would make comprehenſible to the underſtanding of thoſe who view him. By that, his ſubjects are tranquil, tumultuous, ferrocious, or amiable, cheerful or melancholy, not containing any thing contrary to that idea, and, give the perfect ſignification of the ſubjects; by which means he moves our intellects, and acquire above all, power, and authority, like Poetry and Oratory.

Beſides this, in each of his figures one ſees

expressly that which he did before that act; and one almoſt comprehends that which he preciſely ought to do after. We ſee none of the actions entirely compleat; on the contrary, all are in action, a little after it is begun, or a little before it is finiſhed; and it is that which gives them ſuch life, that to look at them attentively, they appear moving. In fact, if we wiſh to examine the preſent painting in all the aforeſaid parts, we ſhall know, that if Raphael had not been always ſo great in his time, one might ſay, this would be ſingular for its great beauty.

You already know that the ſubject of this painting is taken from Scripture, when, carrying Jeſus Chriſt the Croſs to mount Calva; the women in ſeeing it, burſt into tears, and he, as a Prophet, tells them not to weep for him, but for their children; thus announcing the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. Raphael, to make more comprehenſible this painting, ſhews, at a diſtance, Mount Calva, which one aſcends by a winding path, that turns to the right hand out of the door, whence it is ſuppoſed our Lord fell at the firſt turn of the ſame road, from which ſide he is drawn by a Ruſſian with a cord with which he tied him.

It is ſuppoſed that this painting having been done for the Church of MADONNA DEL DOLORE, the patrons wiſhed that the painter would introduce Madonna in it; although it is alſo poſsible that the idea was his own: However it might be, Raphael knew on all occaſions how to find a mode the moſt noble, decorous, and

expreſsive, to repreſent whatever may be the ſubject.

Wiſhing to figure in that painting the mother of a perſon who was conducted to the place of execution, and treated without compaſſion by the miniſters, he choſe the moſt unhappy ſtate of another, who, to ſave her ſon, is neceſſitated to ſupplicate the infamous crowd to have pity upon him. In that ſtate Raphael painted the Madonna, who being on her knees, does not ſee her ſon, and who of herſelf could give him no ſuccour, but in the act of the moſt efficacious ſupplication manifeſts, that having fallen to the ground he has occaſion of the commiſeration of ſome one to raiſe him up. To this expreſſion of humility in the Virgin, the painter gave nobleneſs, by painting at her ſide the Magdalen, ſaint John, and the other Marias, who accompany her and ſuccour her, ſupporting her under the arm.

The ſe perſons are repreſented full of grief for the ſufferings of our Lord; particularly the Magdalen, who appears almoſt as if ſhe were ſpeaking to Jeſus. Saint John is ſuccouring the Virgin Mary. One ſees Jeſus Chriſt fallen; not weak however or worn down; but in the act of menacing with his words, as the Evangeliſt relates; and his aſpect beſides being in that painting of a beauty and excellence almoſt incomprehenſible, manifeſts itſelf as inflamed with a prophetic ſpirit, which correſponds exactly with the divine perſon it repreſents, who is always divine although in ſufferings. It is admirable alſo for the propriety of Raphael, who never

meanly expreſſed any thing, when its character could, or ſhould be repreſented with nobility. The action of all the figure is animated and noble: The left arm, which with his beautiful hand reſts upon a ſtone, is all ſpread; but in the folds of the large ſleeve he manifeſted a momentaneous act, appearing as if they were yet in air, and had not finiſhed their fall according to the inclination of their weight. With the right hand, our Saviour embraces the croſs which is fallen upon him, nor does he wiſh it ſhould be taken away; on the contrary, he appears in the act of embracing it: a thought moſt worthy of the imagination of Raphael, who even in an action, which to many would appear indifferent, remembers that Jeſus ſuffered becaute it was his will.

He is not leſs admirable in the variety of the characters, which he knew how to expreſs in the executioners; ſhowing that among the bad one meets with worſe. This figure, with his back turned, draws Jeſus Chriſt with a cord, and appears not to have had any other object but the brutal deſire of arriving with the ſufferer to the place of execution. The other, who ſuſtains in ſome manner the croſs, appears as if moved by a certain compaſſion, and that he would wiſh to raiſe up Jeſus Chriſt. At the ſide, is a Soldier who throws the croſs upon the ſhoulders of Chriſt, and raiſing the lance in the act of threatening him, expreſſes the greateſt iniquity in wiſhing even more to oppreſs our Lord already fallen.

All theſe reflections only tend properly to

invention, which in truth is that which makes noble the art of painting, and discovers the force of the understanding of the artist, who, when he arrives to that part of the excellence which Raphael obtained, merits the title of a great man, like great Poets and great Orators, It is necessary however to remark, that perfect invention does not consist only in a beautiful conception, or in a charming thought, but in that unity of progressive ideas which first fills and occupies the intellect of the professor, and then that of the spectators; and he ought to maintain the same ideas from the first disposition of the whole, even to the last stroke of the pencil, forming one only thing in the end of the work.

Many other artists, who, to common amateurs and vulgar painters appear inventors, have at least been entirely ignorant of the aforesaid parts possessed by the great Raphael, confounding, at every instant, invention with composition. Invention is the true poetry of painting, already formed in the mind of the painter, who then represents it as if he had seen it, or that the action he represents had happened before his eyes.

Composition, to the contrary, consists in the co-ordination of all the objects which enter in the aforesaid invention. By the equivocation introduced into the schools of painters, and the heads of amateurs, arises the belief that paintings are invented and composed only to please the sight by a diversity of objects, with various directions and contrapositions, forgetting

the part moſt noble, which is the ſignification appertaining to invention.

Some ignorant people have dared to ſay that Raphael was not a compoſer, becauſe they met but with the few images of the Madonna, and had never ſeen the magnificent works of the Vatican, nor thoſe of the acts of the Apoſtles, invented by him for a work of tapeſtry, which even in Madrid one can ſee and contemplate in the complete collection of the Duke of Alba. When, however, one could not obſerve theſe, nor the prints of Raphael, the ſole painting of which we ſpeak could convince any one of his eminent quality in this part. In fact, who knew better than him how to equilibrate * the compoſitions, to piramid † the groups, and to give the contraſt of an alternative motion to the members of the figures, with infinite variety of directions, ſo that all the parts of the divine work appear to be living? And who underſtood better the juſt quality of the figures which are ſuitable to a hiſtory, and to diſpoſe of them in a manner that none reſt idle or uſeleſs? If he uſed only moderation, and rarely certain violent motions, it was to ſubject every thing to expreſſion, and to paint the ſtate

* To EQUILIBRATE a compoſition means, that the objects ought to be diſtributed in a manner that they do not leave one part of the painting void, and the other full, and that this diſtribution appears natural, and never affected.

† To PIRAMID the groups, is to make the objects together form a piramid, that is, that it has a greater baſe than point. And that in any other form but that in which they are diſpoſed, be it ſtraight or circular, they will have a frightful effect.

of mind of the perſon he repreſented, it being very inconſiſtent that a thoughtful man ſhould have the ſame action of one who is fighting, running, or walking. So that the noble and the plebian, age and youth, and every diverſity of ſtate, natural and accidental, ought to be diſtinguiſhed in a good compoſition as Raphael has done; that being a part of invention.

Deſign is the moſt efficacious inſtrument which the painter has to explain the conceptions of his mind, and is alſo moſt beautiful in this painting, as in all the other works of Raphael: and if he in that did not arrive to the whole beauty of the Grecian ſtatues, it was by reaſon of the cuſtoms of his time being ſo different from that of the Grecians, as alſo the occaſions, and objects ſo different in which he exerciſed his talent.

If, however, the ancients had been under the neceſsity of deſigning an Executioner by the ſide of a Chriſt, certainly they would not have done it better, nor in any other mode than that which one ſees him with his back turned, in this painting. If the proportion of his ſtature required a man rough, and brutal, it would have been very improper to ſubſtitute in his place an elegant figure, like the Gladiator of Borgheſe, which claims to itſelf the attention more of Chriſt himſelf, as happens in the famous work of Domenechino in the chapel of St. Andrew, in the church of St. Gregory, at Rome, where all admire more the executioner, who flogs the ſaint, than the figure of the ſaint himſelf, who ought

to have been the principal, and the hero of the hiſtory. The ſame defect has reigned, and ſtill reigns in almoſt all the paintings of the famous painters who flouriſhed from the beginning of the paſt age. Notwithſtanding, whoever would wiſh to ſee in the Ancients an example of character not always beautiful, ſhould obſerve the Grinder of Florence, and he certainly will not ſee in that figure the character of the Wreſtlers, the Silenus, and of the excellent Gladiator.

He who knows how to conſider the ſtyle of deſign of Raphael in that as well as in his other works, will find the ſame ſpirit of the ancients; that is, in having known how to comprehend and mark with preciſion and clearneſs, all the moſt eſſential parts of the conſtruction of the human body, leaving almoſt inviſible the things ſuperfluous and inſignificant. But that which above all occaſions aſtoniſhment in the deſign of Raphael is, that the character, of the perſon painted, correſponds ſo with the actions he repreſents, that effectively it appears as if one ſaw a man; who, not by chance, but by natural inclination did that in which Raphael repreſented him, and this one does not only obſerve in the countenance, from which one is uſed to know the mind of man, but alſo in the form of all the body, and its parts.

In a figure, whoſe back one ſees, he repreſented a man robuſt and rough, as are often idiots, and he gave him a proportionable action without expreſsing the particular intention. To the contrary, in the two afore-

ſaid, he expreſſed the mind in the faces, as a proportion more elegant than in the bodies. One obſerves, eſpecially in the Chriſt, the moſt beautiful countenance, with expreſsion the moſt lively, without altering in the leaſt part the regularity or nobleneſs of its phyſiognomy. Alſo all the principal parts of the bones and muſcles are marked there, but do not injure the greatneſs of the principal forms. This character one obſerves alſo in the neck, and hand on which he leans; and though this action of leaning preſſes the fleſh in a manner which almoſt hides the bones, and the joints, that, nevertheleſs, gives ſuch contour to the thumb, and to the other fingers, and ſo correſponds to the character of the head, as if it were executed by the moſt able Grecian artiſts, who had wiſhed to make a figure of a character between that of Jove and Apollo; which effectively ought to be that which correſponds with Chriſt, adding only the accidental expreſsion of the paſsions in which he is repreſented.

I will not be diffuſe in ſaying how excellent is every little ſtroke of the pencil in the knowledge of foreſhortening, and the outlines, which are hid one within the other, according to the point of view, ſo that it appears to him who conſiders well that work, that in many places the ſight can penetrate within the ſurface. The turns of all the parts of the head according to the action and point of view, is executed as Raphael was accuſtomed. But it would be too long to ſpeak of every little obſervation, and

every merit that one meets with in that excellent man; and in general one ought to be perſuaded, that whenever in his works one finds any part executed with leſs excellence, one ſhould attribute it to ſome of his diſciples, and that he could not do more than retouch them, on account of the many commiſsions which he had in his beſt time, and in conſequence, one ought not to conſider theſe parts as his.

After having ſeen and examined the moſt precious painting (for what regards the moſt noble part of the art) that is preſerved in the Royal Palace, and which contains in a moſt ſublime degree, the firſt conſiderations of painting, we ſhall proceed to ſee paintings in a ſtyle more eaſy, in which is abreviated all difficulty. I ſhall ſpeak of them, however, only in general.

The firſt works which offer are of Lanfranco, among which the funeral of an Emperor, with a combat of Gladiators is excellent. That work contains in itſelf only one appearance of things moſt excellent in the art. In the deſign, there is ſomething of that general idea of the conſtruction of the human body in which conſiſts the beauty of the ancients. It has part of the expreſsion of Raphael, as alſo of the maſs and eaſy clare obſcure of Correggio: this however is not executed entirely, but only indicated. There is a combat of boats, a ſacrifice, and other paintings of that author which are alſo beautiful.

There are here very many other paintings,

of various schools, but do not arrive to that excellence which is before mentioned. One [illegible]s with some of Poussin, and among these [illegible]chanal sufficiently beautiful, whose figures are a little less than a foot in height. This is a work well finished, of very good design and colouring, with some very graceful women and children, who are dancing. The country which forms the field of the painting is as beautiful as one could wish. This painting, destined for the cover of a harpsichord, was afterwards enlarged by the same Poussin, or by Gaspar his brother-in-law.

It would be a desirable thing that many young painters would study with application these beautiful examples of the arts which I have heretofore described, not only in copying them, but in imitating them; two things very different, because all those who copy a work of painting, are not by that made able to produce similar things, if they do not apply themselves, and purpose to follow the reasons of the author of the original. This is the only means of drawing profit from the study of the things of others. Therefore, in all paintings, one finds two essential parts: one comprehends the reasons of things, which we may call the traces left by the understanding of the artist; the other is the style of the work; that is, the habit of the execution of the author. Generally, those who copy and pretend to study the works of great men, apply the principal care to imitate that appearance which I have called MODE:

and from hence it arises, that the original being taken away, and see themselves in a necessity to copy [redacted] work in which occur other things and circumstances different from that which they have copied, they find themselves without a guide. But he who effectively studys and observes the productions of great men with the true desire of imitating them, makes himself capable of producing works which resemble them; because he considers the reasons with which they are done; and in that manner, comprehending them, can adapt them to all things where they are suitable, and thus it makes him an imitator without being a plagiarist.

From what I have said, I conclude that the beginners of painting ought to apply themselves to study well the works of great men, not however only to imitate them blindly, but to the end of finding out which are the parts of nature they have chosen to imitate, persuading themselves that nothing is good in their works if it be not conformable to nature. After having acquired a certain practice in copying the said works, they ought to study the same in nature, and to observe what parts most resemble the choice of the maiters whose works the study to copy. In that manner one will be enabled to follow whatsoever natural inclination one may have, and even although one does not arrive to equal the masters one proposes to imitate, following nature, one shall not fail of acquiring sufficient merit and honor in the art; because nature is so abundant and various in her productions that she

offers to all talents parts proportioned to their capacity; and it is sufficient to imitate him with the reasons I have endeavoured to explain as well as I am able, and as my little practice of writing and the quality of this little work, will permit me, which finally is only a letter written with good will, and with little leisure to reduce it to the best form, which unites with my confined abilities to render it more imperfect. From whence I intreat you to exculpate me with the public, and to supply with some explanations the obscurity of my mode of expressing myself; because to give greater clearness to my ideas I should have occasion to extend them, and to write a book of precepts; a thing which on no account I would dare to undertake.

I humbly offer you this little which my occupations have permitted me, and in that which would be more useful than words and writings, command him who owes you every, esteem and is, desirous to serve you.

ARANJUEZ. 4th March 1776.

LETTER,

FROM

ANTHONY RAPHAEL MENGS,

TO A FRIEND,

UPON THE

RISE, PROGRESS, AND DECAY,

OF THE

ART OF DESIGNING.

LETTER

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THE reſult of our converſations reſpecting the art of deſigning, is the requeſt that you make me of writing my opinion upon its riſe progreſs, and decay. Very voluntarily would I do it, by diſcovering to you all that which by long experience and reflection I have learnt: if I could

believe it of any utility to others; but I am reſtrained by two obſtacles; the firſt is the diffidence I feel in finding I am unable to explain myſelf with that propriety neceſſary; the other is the impoſsibility of communicating to others a clear idea of theſe things without beginning by the moſt trivial precepts and elevating oneſelf gradually to the moſt ſublime; which would employ me in a very great work, ſuperior to my phyſical or mental powers. Yet, nevertheleſs, the will I have to oblige you, makes me ſet aſide every obſtacle in order to write ſomething, and ſhow you my ready obedience. I pray you however, to receive this letter as a proof of our friendſhip, and not as a treatiſe worthy to be given to the public.

The major part of human inventions are produced from neceſsity, except however what we call the fine arts, which are derived from the inclination a man has for imitation. The materials which are employed in theſe, exiſt in nature itſelf; and ſince ſhe contains things which in ſome manner reſemble one another, I believe that ſuch reſemblances have excited in men the deſire of ſupplying and adding the parts which are deficient, or defective, to make them more alike; and by theſe means of compariſon, they muſt have known how to find many things, which then they executed by the artifice of imitation.

To comprehend that which I have preſently to ſay, it is neceſſary that I ſhould explain what I mean by IDEA. By idea therefore I underſtand

that impreſsion which things leave in our brain, in the meantime the ſame impreſsion can retira to the memory to repreſent the ſame preciſion. Theſe ideas are more or leſs clear and diſtinct according to the greater or leſſer intenſity with which our underſtanding receives them, and according to its capacity of diſtinguiſhing and determining the moſt eſſential parts of things. Few are the inventions which owe not their beginning to chance; that is, to that combination which we give this name, becauſe we are ignorant of its cauſe. The arts of deſign have apparently their origin, as I have ſaid, from the inclination and deſire of imitating things; from whence aroſe the PLASTICA; it being very natural that men firſt conceived the idea of imitating human figures, or of animals, with earth moulded together with the hands, and that then by chance, or by reflection, they baked them by the fire, to make them more hard and durable.

Hiſtory ſhows not, with preciſion, the progreſſion of this art; but it is very natural that it was thus, becauſe we know that even after the perfection of the arts, there have ſtill been people who uſed ſtatues of baked earth; and being beſides of the moſt remote antiquity the art of building with bricks, and giving them a certain form, and of baking them, it is very likely that in the ſame time came to men the idea of forming and baking figures of the ſame material. Some authors pretend that the Teraſins or houſhold Gods of Laban, ſtolen by Racheles, were Images of

baked earth: but I do not with to amuſe myſelf in examining theſe facts of ſo great antiquity, in the knowledge of which, writers are ſo divided, and confuſed; and this muſt neceſſarily have happened from having all pretended to make the hiſtory of the arts exact, with the preoccupation of their having been invented in one only place, and by one only nation; which does not appear true, becauſe man being the ſame in all places, and having the ſame neceſsities, paſsions, and caprices, of courſe in all times and countries he had thought, and ſtill thinks, in the ſame manner, and had invented the ſame things.

Before I proceed I ſhall explain the word ART. I believe it is nothing more than the manner of producing any work with determinate means, and with a determinate end. The end of the Fine Arts is to delight by way of imitation, and the means are to order the imitative things in a manner that in the imitation they may have more order and clearneſs than the things themſelves; which produces beauty, and therefore the arts which have this object are called the FINE ARTS. Beauty in particular, is no more than a ſtyle of being in things, which by moſt ſimple means gives us a clear idea of their good and eſſential qualities. Many are of an opinion that among the fine arts ſculpture is the moſt ancient, becauſe it is that which moſt ſimply imitates the figure of things. It was invented at different times and places, but it appears they began to introduce it by way of worſhip.

which is called IDOLATRY. It might be alſo that it had a beginning ſtill more innocent, ſuch as ſeeking by means of images to conſerve the memory of perſons beloved, or of talents, or merit ſuperior to others, or perhaps to ſignify ſome quality of nature, by means of figures, in order to inſtruct the ignorant, as we know they practiſed in Egypt. That nation could not perfect theſe arts, although they practiſed them there for many ages, becauſe their religious worſhip oppoſed it, as it did not permit the artiſts to depart from the eſtabliſhed form of their Idols, and becauſe the claſs of Citizens who employed them were yet held as vulgar. To theſe reaſons they united others to impede the progreſs of the arts, and the principal one was, that the Egyptians, as well as the Caldeians, Arabs, and others who executed ſome figures, were too ignorant and unpoliſhed to be able to produce things which were not very vulgar. It is natural to man to have a propenſity and attachment for material things which fall under the ſenſes; and for that reaſon other nations who came afterwards, although they were in times more enlightened, followed the firſt inventors, nor did they ever entirely depart from their low ſtyle. The ſame has happened at the reyival of the arts in Europe, as I ſhall ſay in its place.

When the arts of Deſign were introduced into ſome parts of Greece, and in others were invented, they preſently took the beſt form, as well becauſe theſe people had the beſt inſtruction, as becauſe they were of the greateſt

beauty. The firſt is proved by not having been before Homer flouriſhed in Greece, any ſculptor or painter of reputation; and the ſecond is atteſted by all Hiſtorians, and proved by experience. The works of that divine Poet ſhow that in his time the arts were not much advanced, becauſe the idea which he gives of them is very poor, and he ſays nothing that can be comparable to the poſterior works of the Greeks. He never mentions any ſtatue of marble; and when he ſpeaks of any productions of the arts, he adds always the richneſs and the ornaments; from whence I infer, that the idea which he had of their works, was that which he had taken from the Phenicians, who, by means of Commerce, diſſeminated them through the maritime countries.

When finally the Grecians began to cultivate deſign, they were already, in ſome Degree, a polite nation; for that reaſon they did not practice, like the Grecians and the other people aforeſaid, vulgarly following one an other, the Deſciple copying the maſter; but with philoſophical reaſons, they ſought the parts moſt noble, and the things moſt worthy to be imitated, and always adding one idea to another, they arrived to the higheſt degree of perfection,

One ought not to believe that the Grecians omitted the minutiæ of the art on account of being ignorant of it; becauſe we know that Dedalus, one of the moſt ancient ſculptors in wood, was held as ſingular in the expreſsion of the veins of the body, and in the fineneſs of

the work; but this method, originating from the mere imitation of nature, was ſoon abandoned by the Grecians, who conſidered that that which was of importance to give an idea of the human figure was the conſtruction and form of the body, by the greateſt and moſt eſſential parts. They ſaw that in compoſing a man entire, or a buſt, or parts which have articulation, their actions, and movements depend on diſtending the members from the body, or in contracting them; from whence they inferred, that the agility and eaſe of the motions, depend principally that the members be not heavy, but of ſuch a proportion as to be able to be moved by the muſcles moſt near. The ſight of, and the experience which they acquired by GYMNASTICKS, made them diſcover that perſons of a ſpacious thorax were moſt proper for exerciſe and fatigue; and according to theſe reflections they formed their figures with the moſt ſimple contours, giving only the clear and neceſſary idea of each member and part of the body, without letting the minutiæ appear, marking, however, with clearneſs, and determinately all the eſſential parts, and alſo with the moſt diſtinction thoſe which were real; but without exceeding the limits of poſsibility.

In this mode they invented and eſtabliſhed the way to a beautiful ſtyle, comprehending in their works the ſtructure of man, and his mechaniſm, better than that which is in nature itſelf. Proceeding thus, they added always the greateſt energy in their works, and dividing

always more the general parts, they found the grace and ſweetneſs of the art.

Perfection of beauty aroſe to the higheſt point by the hand of Phidia, in the time of Pericles, and the other parts, even to the Grace of the Arts, encreaſed even to the time of Alexander the Great, in which Praxiteles, and Policletus, elevated ſculpture to the higheſt degree of perfection. But, ſince all human thoughts and actions always tend to progreſsion, when the artiſts who ſucceded them wiſhed to join any thing to the perfection of their maſters, they formed no other expedient except adding the ſuperfluous to the eſſential; but the human underſtanding being limitted, they could not combine the one with the other, and as much as they introduced of the uſeful, they loſt in the neceſſary parts, and wanting thus the moſt important, the Art went backward in its perfection. Notwithſtanding this natural courſe of things, the art ſuſtained itſelf for a long time in Greece, and eſpecially in Athens, becauſe philoſophy, ſo natural to that nation, preſerved it from falling into trifling things, by leaving the greateſt and important, which happened to thoſe people who ſuffered themſelves to be deceived and led away by the pure delight of the ſight, and by that capriciouſneſs which we call MODE, and which has generally no other merit than that of not having exiſted in the preceding day.

Finally, it cauſed great peril to the arts when the Romans conquered Greece, but by good fortune, the conquerors were not ſuch barbarians

as to remain inſenſible of the high magnificence and beauty of the Grecian works: ſo that, if by the force of their arms, with a government entirely military, and with the auſterity and almoſt fierceneſs of their cuſtoms they arrived to ſubject the Grecians, theſe, to the contrary, with the amenity of their genius, with the ſoftneſs of their manners, and with the beauty of their works, ſubjected, as one may, the Romans; who, as ſoon as they knew Greece, confeſſed themſelves barbarians, and conveyed their arts and artiſts to Italy, and employed themſelves to cultivate the inventions of their captives.

We will now conſider that which the ſame thing produces in different nations according to their principles and cuſtoms. The Romans, who were Soldiers and Orators, but not Philoſophers, ſcarce began to abandon their ruſticity and harſh manner before they fell into the relaxation of exceſsive luxury, and confuſed the idea of the beautiful with that of the rich, perſuading themſelves, as alſo now many actually do, that all that which pleaſes is beautiful; and on this maxim they made themſelves arbiters of judging of every thing without ſcience, and without a knowledge of the eſſence of things. The Romans had few artiſts, in proportion to the Grecians, and generally availed of theſe, but they did great injury to the arts by employing of ſlaves, and by the ignorance with which they judged of their works. Greece, in ſpight of its abaſement, revived to a ſmall atom

of liberty and felicity; and when finally the arts were forced to yield to the courſe and viciſſitudes of human things, they were not loſt or ruined intirely, until the invaſion and oppreſſion of that barbarious and ferocious nation which even now domineer, and tyranniſe over them.

The tranſlation of the Roman Empire to Conſtantinople, contributed very much to the decay of the arts in Italy, and in Greece; the laſt finding itſelf ſtripped of its beſt works, and of its beſt Artiſts and deſpoiled of its beſt ornaments to adorn the new Rome; and in Italy becauſe they were left expoſed to the invaſions and conqueſts of Barbarians. Alſo concurred much to the ruin of the arts, the neceſsity in which were found at that time the heads of Chriſtianiſm, to extirpate Idolatry, and to deſtroy Idols, in which indiſtinctly were comprehended all the moſt beautiful ſtatues, condemning, and aboliſhing the Idols and thoſe who made them; and that with ſo much fury, that it is wonderful there are remaining ſo many beautiful works of venerable antiquity.

Then, when they formed anew the weſtern Empire, Idolatry was already extirpated, and Chriſtianiſm eſtabliſhed in its very vaſt provinces; from whence they thought of the arts, but with little ſucceſs, becauſe ignorance had occupied all the world, and this Empire being among nations barbarous and ferocious, ſeperated from the commerce of countries of a climate ſoft and benign, and of cuſtoms mild, where

in other times the arts and ſciences were flouriſhing, they did nothing excellent; and the ſculptors, eſpecially, dedicated themſelves to imitate men in thoſe ridiculous dreſſes which hide, but not adorn the figures. Such are all the monuments which are called Gothic, under which name are to be underſtood all the German and neighbouring nations.

In this unhappy ſtate the arts remained for many ages without ever improving, until they began to revive in Italy; and particularly in the Republic of Florence. The firſt ſtep was to collect medals and ſtones engraved by the ancients, and with that imitation they began to emerge from German barbarity. Ghiberto was the firſt who attempted to imitate the ſaid antiquity, but as he never ſaw the grand ſtatues of the Ancients, he remained famous only in trifles. To him ſucceeded Donatello; and ſoon after Michael Angelo Buonarroti profiting by the ſtatues gathered from de Medici, opened his eyes, and he ſaw that the anciens had poſſeſſed a certain art in the imitation of truth, with which they made the imitation more intelligible and beautiful than the original itſelf. That great artiſt ſought the origin of beauty, and believed to have found it by means of Anatomy, upon which he fixed his greateſt ſtudy, and arrived to ſuch excellence that he immortalized himſelf by that new track, although he did not find in it that which he ſought, namely, beauty, becauſe it is not to be found in a ſole part, but in the whole, and in the union of ana-

tomy, proportion, and other circumſtances which compoſe beautiful things.

The other Sculptors of the Florentine ſchool imitated Michael Angelo in the appearance of the anatomical ſtyle, but without arriving to the knowledge of their maſter and; in that John Bologna, Mont Orſoli, and others became much inferior, even until ſculpture decayed with the fate of the Republic, and its Government paſsed to reeſtabliſh itſelf in Rome. Here Algardi began to introduce in ſculpture the ſtyle which the painters of his time already followed; that is, he pretended to uſe in his art the ſame imitation of painting, ſearching the effects of clare obſcure to augment certain parts by the ſight: In ſhort, he exceeded the limit of the end of ſculpture, which is, to imitate the form of truth, and not the appearance, which is the office of painting: in this manner he introduced an affected ſtyle.

To Algardi ſucceeded Lorenzo Bernini, who began where the other had finiſhed, and having dedicated himſelf entirely to puzzle the eye made certain ſtatues and groups with inventions the moſt bold and fanciful, and in a certain manner PLEASING, as we ſee by many of them at Rome, in which he always ſacrificed, correctneſs to brilliancy, and made all the forms altered.

The ſculptors who have come after, have ſhewn themſelves undecided in the imitation of Algardi, and Bernini; and if they have availed of truth, it has been to find the forms, and

to ſubject them to the manner of the aforeſaid maſters. The Fleming, who did children ſo charmingly, attempted to imitate antiquity in the figure of ſaint Suſan, and ſucceeded in imitating the appearance, but not the eſſential maxims.

Ruſconi has been the laſt of ſculptors worthy of being cited. His works are more pleaſing than perfect, becauſe in place of good reaſoning of the art, his beauty conſiſts only in the obſervance of certain practical rules, which, in place of doing honour to the art, debaſe it.

By what I have until now explained of ſculpture, one might infer that it was exalted by means of Philoſophy, and that neglecting or forcing eſſential reaſons, it ſo decayed that it has no appearance of imitation of the works of the ancients; and laſtly, having abandoned its philoſophical ſpirit, (the true end and object of the arts,) it precipitated into the deſpicable ſtate in which it now is. Perhaps ſome will ſay that it has flouriſhed and ſtill flouriſhes in France, but you my dear friend have ſeen the works of thoſe profeſſors, and have eaſily diſcovered that it is not ſo. The ſame ſpirit which reigns among painters, perſecuted the ſculptors, that is, the abuſe of excellence by entering too much in it.

As I have been able to obſerve in hiſtories which treat of the arts that painting had been invented much later than ſculpture, I have my doubts if the nations who cultivated ſculpture before the Greeks had ever known painting. It

is not mentioned in the ſacred writings, or in ancient hiſtory, or even by the Egyptians, from whence I conclude, that all thoſe nations were ignorant of it before it was learnt by the Greeks; and ſince the origin of the arts conſiſted in the imitation of true things, I believe that for a long time they only made things carved, of colours reſembling nature, and perhaps that idea came from the colours which the ſame materials had, and particularly baked earth, which reſembles the colour of the ſkin. Pliny relates various hiſtories of the invention of painting, but he himſelf judges thoſe hiſtories not to be very exact. He ſuppoſes it nevertheleſs very ancient, and cites ſome works done in Italy by the Grecians, which in his time were ſtill preſerved freſh in Lanuvium, although they were done a little after the deſtruction of Troy. The time in which that author ſays Bularco flouriſhed, is very ancient, and he ſuppoſes before that lived thoſe who did the MONOCHROMATI, that is, of one only colour. This paſſage of Pliny gives occaſion to make ſome reflections, by reaſon of the MONOCROMATI which have been found in Herculaneum, and are in the collection of Portici, which, with a mind ſo great, and with ſo much good taſte his Catholic Majeſty began, and if he had continued with the ſame ardour and love for the arts, he would have ſatisfied the expectations of all nations, and all wiſe people.

* Theſe paintings, or to ſay better deſigns, done of only one colour, a dark red, upon a table

of white marble; have but an indifferent degree of excellence in reſpect to the profiles, but in all the reſt of the ſtyle they appear as works done in the infancy of the art; as well in the taſte which reigns in the cloathed parts, as in the extremities of the hands and feet: This opinion of mine upon the antiquity of theſe paintings, has not been approved by ſome learned perſons who have written in the Greek language, ſaying that the letters in which the names of the perſons repreſented are written, are of times very poſterior. To thoſe one might reply, that the author being an Athenian, that nation was able to ſurpaſs the other in the ſtyle of writing. But beſides that this explanation does not ſatisfy me, I find other difficulties in the colours with which the ſaid paintings are done, being, not of red earth, but of cinnabar which the ancients called MINIUM or carmine, and we are certain that this colour was not known until even after Apelles. In fine if theſe paintings are not an impoſition; that is, that alſo in that time they wiſhed to make them paſs more ancient, than what they really were, it would be neceſſary to ſay that painting flouriſhed in Athens very late, or that the ignorant were not aſhamed to put their names to their works, or that they were of ſome rich Amateur who was not obliged to know better; or finally, that they ſerved for nothing but the erudition of the hiſtory of painting.

Returning to our reflections I ſay, that not finding any thing of certainty in authors near the commencement of painting, we ought to be-

lieve that it began by ſimple contours, filling the half with one colour only which moſt reſembled the object they wiſhed to repreſent. Some paintings of Herculaneum, made in imitation of Egyptian things, confirm my opinion. I do not ſay that theſe are of that time, but I believe them done in imitation of that taſte, to make them paſs for things truly Egyptian. In the ſame manner, or with little difference, has modern painting begun, as I ſhall preſently deſcribe, and thus the Chineſe began, and we ſee they have proceeded but little further.

It is likely that this ſtate of infancy in Grecian Painting (if ever it were ſo) remained but little time. Pliny, who compiled all the authors who wrote before him, although he does not treat of colours, except by caſualty, yet he gives an idea of what muſt have been the colouriſts anterior to the MONOCROMISTS; and ſince he ſpoke, as I ſuppoſe, principally of Grecians, one might prudently conjecture, that that nation ſoon abandoned this ſtyle, and that they began to uſe a little of ſtate obſcure and to make MONOCROMATI, and by little and little proceeded to join the variety of colours, and gradually, with the ſame philoſophical ſpirit which diſtinguiſhed them in Sculpture, they conducted painting even to the higheſt degree of perfection.

Polignotus, who flouriſhed towards the time of Phidias, was the firſt who perfectly expreſſed cuſtoms, and by that merited ſo much applauſe in this florid time of Greece. Parrhaſius was of a very fertile genius, and poſſeſſed all the parts of pain-

ting, as well as Zeuxis and others of that time. Protogenes was even more able and finished than them; and then came Apelles, who, having found the way open, and living in the age of Alexander the Great, in which time it appeared that nature made its utmost effort to produce and excite the greatest talents in order to sustain the glory and liberty of the country, added to the art of painting the last perfection; that is, Grace, which arises from the certainty which science gives painters to execute and produce facility in the same operation; and in thinking, and making themselves to be understood. Apelles was thus secure of possessing that prerogative, who in praising the qualities of other painters, said that he surpassed them only in Grace; and Protogenes retook it because he knew not how to detach his hands from his works. From this may be deduced that the art then arrived to its highest degree; but since the same could not advance further, or maintain itself in the same state, they began to augment their works in quality and size, dividing them in various classes, as for instance in low subjects, or buffooneries, and in a variety of extravagant things, such as CARICATURES, and other ridiculous species which painting suffered under the same misfortune of sculpture, until Roman luxury degraded it of that nobility with which it had been treated in Greece, by having all their Houses painted by miserable Grecians, or slaves, incapable of thinking, much more of imitating the works of the happy times of Greece, when the people of a city, or of a

province entire gave the reward for a painting. To the contrary, in Rome, every opulent citizen painted only the moſt deſpicable walls of his edifice, and thought it would debaſe noble habitations to paint them, which they dreſſed with marble and bronze, where the expence did more honour than the taſte. In the city of Herculaneum, Stabea, and Pompeia, happily diſcovered by his Catholic Majeſty, one ſees the moſt wretched houſes painted, and even the Taverns and Inns; and if one ſees ſome paintings in the Temples, Theatres, and public Edifices, yet the poverty of the country is known by the few marbles found there, in the mean time that in Rome they abounded with much profuſion.

Now we will conſider my friend, what has been the excellence of Grecian painters of the beſt time, and how much the works of theſe claſsical artiſts ought to be conſidered as ſurpriſing, whilſt we prize ſo much thoſe of Herculaneum. We know for certain that the ancients poſſeſſed deſign in the higheſt degree, becauſe we ſee in their ſtatues, and in thoſe paintings of Herculaneum, that although Deſign is not the part moſt remarkable, yet one finds in it traces of the higheſt taſte, and of a great facility of maintaining the juſt limits of the contours; that is, that they may not be overcharged, harſh, or dry. Above all, it is wonderful to ſee their great knowledge of clare obſcure, and of the nature of air, which, being a body of ſome denſity, communicates, and reflects the light to the parts which do not receive the rays direct.

As I have obſerved, how even in the worſt of theſe paintings that part has been underſtood, although executed with negligence it has ſtupified me to think, and to figure to myſelf, how they could have been the works of the moſt famous painters contemporary with the ſculptors of an Apollo of Belvedere, of a Gladiator, of a Venus of Medicis, and other ſimilar works, which are of artiſts of the firſt rank of antiquity.

Although the colouring of theſe paintings is not very excellent, we are not by that to doubt that the ancients poſſeſſed it in great perfection, when we know that they made a diſtinction between the two Ajaxs of different hands, ſaying that one was nouriſhed with roſes, and the other with fleſh. They knew perſpective, as one may find by the aforeſaid paintings of Herculaneum; and if we do not underſtand it, I know not what Parraſius would wiſh to ſay, when he inſiſted that no one could be a good painter without geometry. That which perhaps the ancients did not poſſeſs as well as the moderns is, machinery compoſition, becauſe their principal ſtudy was the perfection and quality of things, and not the quantity of them. One may believe that their ſtyle of compoſing paintings was little different from the ſtyle of baſ-relief according as one ſees in the ſame paintings of Herculaneum, in which the contraſts, the grace of the figures, the beautiful partitions, and the expreſsions are excellent. One knows even that they were done with quickneſs, and frank-

neſs, and painted with good freſco. In ſhort if one compares theſe paintings with all the works of the moderns, and if one conſiders that they were done in a place of ſuch little conſequence, one may know how much the paintings of the ancients were ſuperior to ours.

I have made this little digreſsion, to remove the doubt which many have entertained, that the ancients were better painters than the moderns, founding their ſentiments upon the mediocrity of the paintings of Herculaneum, and of others, which are conſerved at Rome, without reflecting upon the unhappy ſtate to which the Romans reduced painting. Painting had finally the ſame fate as ſculpture, and the profeſſors of both, falling into extreme ignorance and diſregard, and contributing alſo to the abolition of idolatry, one may ſay, that it was almoſt entirely forgotten, or at leaſt reduced to a miſerable ſtate, which we ſee by ſome holy images, and barbarous moſaics, which are preſerved in ſome ancient churches.

For many ages it remained in this miſerable ſtate; and the ſingularity is, that the ſame cauſe of its ruin, was the cauſe of its revival, that is, the worſhip of the chriſtian religion. The great commerce of Italy with Greece, and other parts of the world, introduced opulence; and the Italians wiſhing to build churches, and to adorn them with images, employed theſe miſerable painters, and Grecian artiſts of moſaics, to perform that little which they knew, and on this occaſion, ſome Venetians, Bolog-

nians, Tuſcans, and Romans, worked with the ſame ruſticity which we ſee in their maſters. Thus they proceeded diſperſing the office of painting until the Tuſcans raiſed it firſt from barbariſm by means of Giotto and his ſchool.

Theſe Tuſcans continued for ſome time in the ſtyle of the laſt Grecians in drapery, and in the partition of the figures; becauſe finding themſelves far from the Germans, and nearer Roman antiquity, and having alſo the opportunity of ſeeing the ancient medals, they ſtudied alſo theſe things. After that firſt ſchool, came others, which advanced a little more, as the Maſolini, and the Maſaccis, which in the air they gave to their dreſs, reſemble the taſte of Raphael, although he was anterior by almoſt an age. The unhappy ſtyle which they then introduced, retarded alſo the progreſs of the arts; which was, by placing contemporary perſons in the paintings of Ancient Hiſtory, with the dreſſes they then uſed in Florence; which injured very much their good taſte. Nevertheleſs, they continued to advance in the art, by copying truth, and by the ſtudy of perſpective; by which means, Ghirlandajo found the mode of a good diſpoſition, and of the exactneſs of deſign. Leonardo da Vinci applied himſelf to clare obſcure, and to the principal parts of painting. At the ſame time it advanced itſelf in the Venitian States, and in Lombardy, by means of Bellini, Mantegna, Bianchi, and others; but by the way which all thoſe followed, the diſciples ſucceeding in the maxims

of their maſters, it was impoſsible that the arts could advance with ardour, or exceed the perfection of Leonardo da Vinci, and Peter Perugino, the firſt having already principals of grandeur, and the ſecond a certain grace and eaſy ſimplicity.

In that ſtate of things, it received a ray of the ſame light which illuminated it in ancient Greece, when Michael Angelo, who with his great talent, had already ſurpaſſed Ghirlandajo, ſaw the works of ancient Greece in the collection of the magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici. He attempted to imitate them in ſculpture; and animated by emulation towards Leonard by the works which between both they had made in the hall of the old Palace at Florence, he gave a new aſpect to painting.

Conſider my friend, how many were the opportunities to revive their talents, when the government gave them a noble ambition, and employed them in great works. What ſublime genius's are unknown, from not being diſcovered in time! But in that age, in which the greater felicity of the Florentine Republic was confined the loſs of its liberty, and the great temporal Roman power, with the princes of its decay, all the powers of Europe found themſelves in fermentation, and the ideas even of the loweſt perſons were great. In that time therefore, it happened that the greateſt talents were employed in moſt extenſive works, which ſerved much to improve the arts. Michael Angelo was choſen to make a ſtatue in marble,

of twenty two palms and an half, the moſt of a Coloſſus that any of the moderns ever undertook.

Pope Julius the ſecond, determined to erect a magnificent Mauſoleum, for which he called Michael Angelo to Rome; and, in the mean time that he was conſidering where to place it, he made him paint the ceiling of the Chapel of Sixtus the fourth. This great work was a vaſt field, and proportioned to the talents of that artiſt, who, at the age of thirty years only, knew how to encreaſe the fire of his genius inſtead of diſſipating it.

Effectively in that Chapel, painted at different times, although conſecutively, one ſees that he improved his ſtyle, and without an occaſion like this he would never have arrived to that degree which he did; becauſe he there diſcovered greatneſs in the whole, exactneſs in the contours, knowledge in the form, great relief, and ſufficient variety; of which they had not then a juſt idea.

In the time of the ſame Pontificate Raphael was called to Rome to paint the Vatican Hall. This ſublime genius began the undertaking of theſe ſpacious walls, and before he finiſhed the firſt painting he enlarged his ſtyle.

He began the ſecond, which was that of Philoſophy, called the School of Athens, with the ideas and maxims which he had terminated the firſt, and he carried painting ſubſtantially to the higheſt degree in which it has been ſeen ſince the time of the Greeks. All thoſe parts which

could be added to the arts after Michael Angelo one finds united in this work. The compoſition, invention, expreſsion, drapery, the variety of the characters, the knowledge, and ſubtilty of the art, one ſees here executed with wonderful facility.

Raphael continued to paint the other Hall, and when he diſcovered the firſt part of the ceiling of Michael Angelo, then it was that he moſt pleaſed. They ſay that Raphael firſt ſtudied in Florence the cartons of that painting; but although that be true, it was not a proper ſtyle applicable to the indifferent paintings which he then finiſhed in the chambers of the Vatican. Michael Angelo was able to please Raphael when he compleated the work of the Sixtina, and diſcovered ſome greater facility and ſweetneſs; and of that great ſtyle, ſo pure and regulated, he compoſed a third ſtyle, with which he then finiſhed his paintings.

The firſt fruit of this new ſtyle of Raphael was the Prophet Iſaiah, which is in a pilaſtre of the Church of Saint Auſtin at Rome: it has all the greatneſs of the prophets of the Chapel Sixtina, but with the difference, that in this is hid all the artifice of the aforeſaid greatneſs, and in in thoſe is diſcovered too much the intention of the author. They relate that a diſpute having aroſe about the price between Raphael and him who ordered that prophet, Raphael left it to the deciſive judgment of Buonarroti, who ſaid that the ſole naked knee was worth more than the ſum in diſpute; from whence one deduces

the generous probity of both. Condivi relates another expreſsion of Raphael, which proves ſtill more his magnanimous character, becauſe he aſſures that that profeſſor returned thanks to God for having been born in the time of Michael Angelo. With ſuch greatneſs of mind, perſons of true merit know how to be emulous!

Raphael painted in the aforeſaid ſtyle the Sibyls of peace, which in their kind could not be very excellent, and with the ſame tenor he proceeded in his other works.

His laſt, which is the transfiguration, contains ſuch delicacy in the art, as well in theory as in practice, and in the execution of the parts painted by his hand, that it gives pain to conſider that we have loſt at thirty ſeven years of age a genius ſo ſublime, born with the ſame ſpirit of the ancient Greeks, and if he had flouriſhed in that time, and with the ſame opportunities he would have diſcovered the ſame qualities, becauſe among the moderns he has been the only one who has poſſeſſed the moſt eſſential requiſites of the art, ſuch as expreſsion, variety, invention, compoſition, deſign, colouring, and drapery. In fine in order to equal the ancients, he wanted nothing but the ſtyle of beauty, which certainly, neither in the ſchools or cuſtoms of his time could he then learn.

At the ſame time Giorgione who was a little anterior to Titian, founded a ſchool of painting at Venice, which ſchool made great progreſs from the opportunities they had of painting great

Façades and Saloons. As Titian by living at Venice had not the opportunity of examining ancient works, he could not fundimentally acquire a great ſtyle like Michael Angelo, and for that reaſon he placed not in the knowledge of the forms all that attention which they merited, and applied himſelf more to the appearance of truth, which depended upon the colours of the body, and arrived in that part by continual exerciſe of painting and copying nature, to ſuch excellence that he has never been equalled; and to this contributed much the magnificence of the Venetian Gentlemen, who willed to be painted by him, or to have from his hand paintings of naked women.

Contemporary with Titian, the Duke of Mantova employed Montegna, and in Modena he eſtabliſhed the firſt academy that has been in Italy, from which came Bianchi, maſter to Anthony Allegri named Correggio. He was called to Parma to paint the Church of Saint John of the Benedictine monks, and with this work, which for that time was very great, he formed a proportionate ſtyle, and gave ſo much taſte to the Parmazans that they commiſsioned him to paint the Cupola of the Cathedral.

That great genius profited of the merit of other painters anterior and contemporary. He took the firſt rudiments from Bianchi, and then ſtudied under Montegna, who was a learned man, and a paſſionate admirer of the ancients, and obliged him to ſtudy their works. Correggio exerciſed alſo the PLASTICA, working in

company with Begarelli and by the exercise of sculpture which facilitaed much the knowledge of bodies, and by the study of antiquity he surpassed the limits of the miserable and confined style of his Masters, and was the first who dedicated himself to relieve the sight by a certain softness and grace of which he was the inventor, and in which he has never after been equaled.

The principal merit of his works consisted in relief, and in the knowledge of clare obscure, as well in the imitation of truth in the bodies, as in the invention of the mass.

In this manner painting arrived at that time to a higher degree of perfection than ever the moderns had carried it; having acquired by Michael Angelo fierceness of contours, the forms of the most robust bodies, and the highest grandeur; by Raphael, Invention, Composition, Variety of Characters, Expression of the state of the Mind, and of dressing well the bodies; by Titian the knowledge of the colours of bodies with all the accidents which the modifications of light can produce in them, and finally by Correggio delicacy and the degradations of Clare Obscure, amorous painting, and the exquisiteness of Grace and Taste.

Painting being in such a state, it was very natural that it should advance under the direction of such great masters, or that it should degenerate into, capricious novelty; which effectively it did. The Tuscans wishing to follow Michael Angelo, imitated only something of the form of

his fierce contours; but without the knowledge and underſtanding of their maſter; and thus they pretended to imitate Salviate, Bronzino Vaſari, and others.

In the ſame manner the Diſciples of Raphael took only ſome part of him, but none of them took the eſſential. Giulio Romano wiſhing to imitate ſeriouſneſs and expreſsiveneſs, made the phiſiognomy horrible and affected. Polidoro in wiſhing to be eaſy, gave into licentiouſneſs. Pierino inclined always to the Tuſcan ſtyle. Penni was cold and inanimate. Pellegrino Manari was of ſhort life; and thus finiſhed that illuſtrious ſchool.

Correggio left not any Diſciple worthy of him, becauſe Parmigianino who immediately followed him, made a mixture of the ſtyle of the Diſciples of Raphael, and of the grace of Correggio, which he overcharged.

Although Titian had not Diſciples who imitated him in every thing, the Venitians were nevertheleſs more fortunate, becauſe painting continued and was ſupported by means of Paolo Veroneſe, who imitated no one, and formed his ſtyle by following nature, whilſt all the other imitators and followers of the ſaid maſters, endeavoured to imitate ſome of their parts, but forgetting the firſt end of the art, which is to imitate truth.

It is conſtant and proved by experience, that every age has its particular character, which by means of a general ferment, enlivens the imaginations of men. Be it by caſualty or by other

cauſes, which are uſeleſs here to examine, it is certain that in the fourteenth and fifteenth age aroſe throughought the world geniuses great in arms, and in the arts.

In Germany, France, Flanders, and in Holland, the arts appeared alſo; but the climate did not permit them to make the progreſs, generally ſpeaking, as in Italy, and their ideas remained inſignificant. Neverthelefs, as theſe were induſtrious and diligent people, they ſhowed in ſome parts more or leſs of their Genius.

In Flanders, and in Holland, where there was moſt commerce, and conſequently moſt riches, they began to produce ſome painters who remained alſo eſtimable in the line of pure imitation of truth. In thoſe countries, where there was a little more inſtruction by reaſon of its communication with Italy, as well as in the free cities of Auguſta and Norimberg, flouriſhed alſo painting, and particularly alſo carving, which muſt have given much opportunity to engrave arms and to make moulds for printing, then invented with ſo much utility to literature and commerce; and many books being publiſhed at that time with cuts engraved in plates, and on wood, that gave motive to many to apply themſelves to painting, to be able to invent and deſign theſe things. Albert Durer found the art of engraving much advanced in regard to mechaniſm, and he added more corrections in deſign and invention; and, with the ſtudy of perſpective, he found alſo the manner of placing the figures and groups in different ſtages, and of giving profundity to

his inventions, as Ghirlandajo had done at Florence. Many wiſhed to imitate Durer, who, had he been born in Italy would have acquired taſte; but neither him, or his imitators, could riſe from barbariſm; not ſeeing any other figures than thoſe of their country, or other dreſſes than the extravagant ones of their time. To all other nations it happened the ſame, and they remained deprived of a good taſte, until they had communication with Italy, and there learnt the arts.

The war, which at the end of that florid age, happened throughout Europe, was a great misfortune for them, and particularly for Italy. The Italian Princes occupied themſelves almoſt entirely in military occupations, and cooled in their love for the arts. The ruin by the war deſolated many provinces and cities. Rome ſuffered infinitely from the famous ſack which the Spaniards and Germans gave it under Bourbon. Florence loſt its liberty, and all Italy was in violent convulſion. Venice only remained exempt from that univerſal pillage; and the great Titian outlived the greateſt turbulence; but money generally failing, or to ſay better, increaſing to all the Italian Princes the neceſsity of ſupplying the exorbitant expences of the war, they failed in rewarding the arts, and the artiſts dedicated themſelves to diligent labour, and with a ſtyle affected and overcharged, ſo that the arts languiſhed for a long time.

By good fortune, were born at Bologna, ſome great geniuſes, which were the Caraccis. They contented themſelves with ſmall recompences, as the ſons of poor fathers, and applied themſelves with the greateſt attention to ſurpaſs the Procaccinis, who were here much envied on account of being foreigners. Lewis, the eldeſt, had ſtudied the works of Correggio, and ſuperficially imitated his ſtyle in the grandeur of the forms and the maſs. He was maſter to his cousins, Hannibal and Auguſtin, who had much talent, and ſtudied a good ſtyle, but were addicted to work in haſte; and by that the firſt works of Hannibal are of good taſte, but overcharged and little ſtudied. He improved by ſtudying Correggio, but ſince his talent was more of a mechanic than an artiſt, he imitated his model only in a part of the appearance, and not in the fundaments of the ſtyle; and by that he could never acquire grace, delicacy, or ſoftneſs. He cauſed, notwithſtanding, great benefit to the art in learning taſte by a new way more eaſy, becauſe all his predeceſſors who ſought taſte, gave into extravagance, and exceeded the bounds of reaſon.

When Hannibal was at Venice, he in part imitated Paolo Veroneſe. He came however to Rome, and ſaw the works of Raphael, and the ancient ſtatues, which ſoon made him a painter of another ſtyle. He moderated his fire; reformed the caricature of his forms, and ſought beauty in the ancient character; but ſtill conſerved a part of the ſtyle of Correggio to maintain his grandeur. In

ſhort, he became a painter, who after the three luminaries of modern painting merited the firſt place.

Lewis came to aſsiſt Hannibal in the work of the Pharnetian Gallery; but ſeeing that it was more difficult to content Rome than Bologna, he returned to his country, where he undertook the painting of the cloyſter of Saint Michael in Bosco, and there employed a ſtyle more ſtudied and of better taſte, and diſcovered his eſteem for Raphael, by placing in one of his hiſtories the Sapho of Parnaſſus of the Vatican.

To theſe Carraccis we owe the reſtoration of painting; and from their ſchool came the celebrated Guido, a painter of much merit, eaſy, and elegant, and who would have been another Raphael if he had had better precepts.

Dominichino, who attached himſelf more to the ancient form, one knows to have ſtudied particularly the Laocoon, and the Gladiator. Lanfranco, of fertile genius, applied himſelf to the ſtudy of the diſtributions of the maſſes, and of the motions of the works of Correggio, and eſpecially of the Cupola of the Cathedral at Parma, taking the ſole appearance, and not the ſubtile reaſons of the art; and Albano, who ſtudied the forms of the ancients, was a graceful painter. In ſhort, none of the diſciples of the Carraccis were of bad taſte.

Guercino da Cento was original in his ſtyle. He had great knowledge in clare obſcure; and

if he had given more nobility to things, he would have been as eſtimable as Guido Reni.

The ſame ſpirit which the Caracci's left in Italy, ſoon produced painters of merit in other nations. In Spain, that profeſsion began to flouriſh in the time of Charles the Vth. and of Philip the IInd. by reaſons aforeſaid, and on account of the great work undertaken by this laſt King. It was unfortunate for Spain, that at that time, painting was adulterated by caricature and affected figures; and as the major part of painters who were there, were of the Florentine ſchool, in which deſign was always prevalent, and a certain melancholy ſeverity of ſtyle, this remained, uptil the Spaniards ſaw the works of Rubens, which pleaſed many ſo much, that they dedicated themſelves with ardour to imitate them, and they made thus, a rare mixture of their own, and of that ſtyle.

James Velaſquez was averſe to making himſelf a follower of any one, and with his noble talent formed a character of his own, founding it in the imitation of truth, and in the moſt exact obſervations of the reaſons and effects of clare obſcure, taking a ſtyle of painting with reſolution, and as one might ſay, with deſpight, indicating the things which he had ſeen in truth without deciding them, or copying them. In ſpight of theſe principles, as Velaſquez, and much leſs the other painters of the Spaniſh ſchool, had not had the exact ideas of the merits of the Grecian works either in beauty or the ideal, they proceeded imitating one the

other, and the greateſt talents imitated truth, but without choice, and were pure naturaliſts.

Of the Flemings, as I have ſaid, ſome had ſeen Italy, and became middling painters; but the major part, moved by utility more than glory, applied themſelves to ſmall pieces of country ſcenes, flowers, animals, and ſimilar things. Rubens had finally a ſuperior talent, and having ſtudied the great Titian at Venice, attempted to imitate him, by taking a way more eaſy; and, wiſhing to ſecure himſelf of pleaſure in appearance, he overcharged as much as his model had of beauty, and with ſo much force, that he had not the firſt ſimple ideas and attention to truth, like Titian; and by that he exceeded the limits of the contours, and had little regard to truth. He had, notwithſtanding, the ſame merit of the Caracci's in Italy; that is, he was the father of the Flemiſh ſchool, which before him, had no proper character.

Anthony Vandyke, who painted in the ſame time, was more the friend of truth; eſpecially in portraits, in which he merited the firſt rank after Titian; and in the acceſſary parts he was ſtill more elegant. All the other Flemiſh profeſſors merited eſteem, according as they more or leſs approached theſe two maſters.

In France, they began to know the ancients, by means of the works which Francis the Iſt. imported from Italy, to adorn, with ſtatues and paintings, Fontainbleau; where he employed

Roſſo, Primaticcio, and Nicola dell' Abate; but with all that, the arts made but little progreſs there, by reaſon of civil wars, until the time of Louis XIII. and XIV.; and although Rubens painted the gallery of the Luxembourg, the few ancient works which there were in France, preſerved that nation from the contagion of that ſtyle.

The culture of the Belles Lettres, and the tranſlation which they publiſhed of the Grecian authors, infuſed in that nation, the deſire of imitating the ancients, and all the artiſts wiſhed and endeavoured to viſit Rome; and in that manner, although for a long time they had not to boaſt of any eminent painter, yet they did not introduce at leaſt any vicious ſtyle. Finally, among the many who came to Rome, Nicholas Pouſsin was him who propoſed to imitate entirely the ſtyle of the ancients, and if the cuſtoms of his age had not impeded him, he would have obtained his end. Painting always in oil ſmall pieces, took from him the opportunity of enlarging his ſtyle, or of executing works of ſo much ſtudy as thoſe of the firſt men of Italy. Conſidering, however, his works only as ſketches, they are excellent.

Immediately after Pouſsin, ought to be placed Charles le Brun; who alſo ſtudied in Italy. He was of a lively genius, and an eſtimable inventor, and had opportunities of ſhewing it in the great works ordered by Louis the XIVth. In the ſame mode, were alſo the good painters, Mignard, le Sueur, Bourdon, and others; until

France quitted the good road, and ſerious ſtudy, to be accounted by ſome artiſts of talents, which they call HOMMES D'ESPRIT, like Jovenet, and Coypel, who went out of the limits of the good and the beautiful, by loading the one and the other placing too much in the whole, and aſpiring to pleaſe the eye more than the reaſon.

It is not ſurpriſing that this happened in France, when even in Italy they abandoned the good taſte of the ſchool of the Caracci's. Who could have imagined in the time of Michael Angelo that there could have come from the Tuſcan ſchool a John of Saint John, a painter of ſo much merit, but ſo far from the ſolid ſtyle? And eſpecially a Peter of Cortona, to fruſtrate all the ideas of the art in Italy; deſpiſing ſerious ſtudy, which even to his time had been the fundament of painting, reducing the whole to only ſuch compoſitions, as could ſeduce the ſight. At the ſame time one ſees in Rome, Andrew Sacchi, a painter of the ſame taſte, and of the ſame eaſe of Cortona, teaching to leave paintings only to indicate, and taking the ideas of natural things, without giving them any determination.

The ſchools of Florence and Rome, changed their road. Thoſe of Bologna and Lombardy extinguiſhed inſenſibly; becauſe to Albano ſucceeded Cignani, and Ventura Lamberti; and to thoſe Franceſchino, Joſeph del Sole, and the capricious Creſpi, who one may call the laſt. In Venice, after the great men, Giorgione, Titian, Paolo, and Tintoretto,

painting decayed at once, becauſe the ſucceſſors regarded only eaſe, without ſearching the fundaments und excellence of theſe; and that which is generally called taſte, has remained as the ſole object of that ſchool.*

Rome was a little more happy; becauſe to Andrew Sacchi, ſucceeded Carlo Maratta, his diſciple, who applied himſelf much to deſign the works of Raphael in the Vatican, and took even from his youth the love of ſerious and exact ſtudy, but the general taſte of his time, did not permit him to follow entirely the character of Raphael, and the opportunity of always painting Madonnas, and Altar-pieces, carried him to a mixed ſtyle of thoſe of the Caraccis and Guido, and thus he ſuſtained the painting of Rome, and prevented its decay as in other countries.

In the mean time that this happened in Rome, Lucas Giordano formed a new ſchool at Naples. He took his firſt principles from Ribera; he went to Rome to ſtudy rapidly the Carracis and their ſchool, and finiſhed by chooſing the ſtyle of Cortona. With this Capital he returned to Naples, and was ſo applauded there, that he founded, as I have ſaid, a ſchool, from whence came Solimena in company with others, and as in that time they were deficient in Rome of painters of merit, one of the diſciples of Solimena, called Sebaſtian Conca, brought there that ſtyle of painting, and thoſe maxims, more eaſy than good, by which he finiſhed the ruin of painting.

In that manner is the noble art loſt to our time, becauſe they knew how to ſpread, as one may ſay, fragments of the idea of ſome profeſſors, that more good ariſes from a mere and material practice than from rules and principles founded upon reaſon.

Artiſts are generally flatterers of the eyes of amateurs, and thoſe have deſtroyed their judgment and ſenſes by the vices of the laſt ſchools.

Before finiſhing, I would wiſh to ſay ſomething of architecture, as ſiſter of the other two noble arts. I have conſidered it in two different aſpects; as it ariſes from two different principles; one being neceſsity, and the other the delight of the imagination. With regard to the firſt, it ought not to be ranked among the Belle Arts, but among the mechanics, becauſe to place a man under cover from all the inclemency of the weather, or building with ſolidity, has nothing to do with beauty; and in fact we ſee in that part the works of the Egyptians, Arabs, and Goths, have not ceded to the Greeks and Latins. But who will ever eſteem them as beautiful as theſe? Speaking however of the origin of that art, it is likely that it was invented and improved by different countries, according to their climates and materials, and to the wants of the people.

The nature of warm climates, and ſcarceneſs of trees, muſt have led men to repair to grottos and mountains; and in cold climates, to woods, where muſt have ariſen the idea of con-

ſtructing in the laſt countries, cabans; and in the firſt, grottos.

The population of the world increaſing, it is very natural that thoſe nations, who lived a paſtoral life, ſhould have thought of conſtructing tents, which are another kind of buildings.

Until this time, neceſsity regulated the delights of men; but ſince they could not for a long time accommodate themſelves to the ſame train of things, they ſoon advanced from that ſtate, and naturally deſiring in all things ſome object which could agreeably occupy the ſenſes and underſtanding, they poſſeſſed in the whole ſome ornament; that is, a certain ſomething, without which, a thing would be that which it ought to be, and give one occaſion to think and fix the attention; as we ſee that even the barbarous nations put in all their furniture, ſpots, colours, and figures, although without taſte and ſymmetry: one ſees, however, that it is inſeparable with human reaſon, to wiſh to make things after ſome idea.

If we examine the principles of hiſtory and of architecture, we ſhall find that it originated in the Eaſt, after the idea of mountains and hills, men heaping up ſtones and earth to cover themſelves, and attempting at the ſame time a competition with nature. The vaſt walls built in the firſt times, are no more than hills, which incloſe a portion of people, and form thoſe immenſe cities which hiſtory mentions; and the tower of Babel was a true mountain.

The pyramids and other ruins, which are ſtill to be ſeen in Egypt, preſent the ſame idea. The Egyptians invented, long before the Greeks, the uſe of human figures, and animals, to ſuſtain their edifices; animating as one may ſay, thoſe ſtones that ought to ſupport part of the fabric. The form of their columns has no elegance, and perhaps they did not uſe them, until they were known to the Greeks. In the other edifices of Aſia, and of the moſt remote antiquity, one cannot diſcover even the leaſt elegance, and one may ſay, they did not poſſeſs the art of architecture, but only the art of building.

The Greeks of Aſia Minor, were the firſt who gave form to the art, by introducing beauty in their buildings. Vitruvius and others refer to that origin; and in fact, one ſees, that the idea of tents and cabans, is preſerved even in the moſt magnificent edifices; but ſince architecture has no origin or prototype in nature, it could not preſently find proportions more beautiful, and remained expoſed to the caprices and ideas of men, of times, and of circumſtances.

The firſt Greeks, who thought ſtrength was the moſt uſeful quality of man, imagined the character of robuſtneſs. Then civil police encreaſing, and cuſtoms being ſoftened, they began to eſteem the beautiful, and gave more elegance to their edifices; but as nature had endowed them with a philoſophical genius, they kept themſelves within the limits of moderation,

nor dedicated themſelves to ſuperfluous ornaments, and luxuries, but contented themſelves with the limits of reaſon, and in this medium conſiſts the beauty of Architecture. The foundation of that art began by neceſsity, and from the uſe of building; its beauty is in the character correſpondent to the end propoſed in the forms and ornaments; and its limit is reaſon. The Greeks in their beautiful times obſerved all that.

The Romans, (a nation more rich and luxuriant than the Greeks,) loaded their architecture with ornaments, and introduced more orders, and more diviſions: and finally loſt that beautiful ſimplicity and ſolidity, breaking off the principal members with capricious contours. When finally they loſt the eſteem of the Belle Arts in the Roman Empire, by being occupied by continual wars; and when the invaſion of the Moors deſtroyed even the principles of good taſte, came the time which we know under that of Gothic Architecture; not becauſe that tribe of barbarians tranſported into Italy any natural ſtyle of architecture, but that they uſed their own buildings, wiſhing to imitate without rule the ancient edifices which they had themſelves deſtroyed; and framing the ideas which diſcovered to them their natural ignorance, and in order quickly to finiſh their buildings, they neglected the ſtudy of good taſte, and of beautiful proportions.

Alſo the tranſlation of the Impetial reſidence from Rome to Conſtantinople, and the diviſion of the Eaſtern and Weſtern Empire, contributed

much to the ruin of the art. The countries, ignorant and remote, ſuch as France and Germany, not knowing even the principles of Grecian architecture, it was not poſsible that they could introduce a good taſte, and by that they not had only ſome idea of the art of building. Perhaps by means of religion, and ſome fugitive Grecian monks, they communicated to the aforeſaid nations ſome idea of the edifices of Conſtantinople; and with that they conſtructed ſome temples, employing only the pure rules of the mechaniſm of building. Finally they augmented that method, and making all merit conſiſt in difficulty and boldneſs, and not in elegance, appeared in thoſe nations, ſuch extravagant and ſtrange things, totally contrary to good taſte and reaſon; and caſually they eſtabliſhed that taſte of Architecture which by abuſe they called Gothic, and which is truly German.

The new Empire being eſtabliſhed in Germany, the ſplendour of the court was the cauſe which propagated its faſhions in other nations, and in that manner the aforeſaid ſtyle of architecture extended itſelf throughout Europe, and remained until Italy had diſsipated every barbariſm that was introduced there. The Venitians, I believe, were the firſt who in honour to St. Mark, built a magnificent temple, availing of a Grecian architect, who, notwithſtanding he preſerved the barbarous ſtyle of the age, was not ſo extravagant in the proportions, as thoſe who are called purely Gothics. Arches and cupolas partake alſo of grandeur in their curves, although very far from true beauty.

Finally the Florentines, by means of Orcagna, began to abandon that deformed ſtyle, and Bruneleſchi was the firſt who reduced the minds of the Italians to the taſte of Grecian Architecture. Bramante and San-Gallo approached it a little more, and from their examples many others dedicated themſelves to ſtudy a good ſtyle. Alſo Michael Angelo applied himſelf to that Grecian ſtyle; but finding it perhaps too ſteril for his fiery and fertile genius, he began and ended with the moſt ardent and intrepid ideas. The grandeur of the building of ſaid Peter gave opportunities to thoſe fervent talents to baniſh and place in entire forgetfulneſs, the ideas of the German ſtyle.

San-Micheli, San-Sovino, Palladio, and Scamozzi adorned the ſtate of Venice, and all theſe united together to diffuſe by their buildings, good taſte throughout Italy; as alſo by their books which they publiſhed, eſpecially Palladio, Scamozzi, Serlio, and Vignola.

If architecture had been able to maintain itſelf in that ſtate which thoſe great maſters had eſtabliſhed, it would not have been ſo little fortunate; but the love of novelty and the ambition of the artiſts, in wiſhing to be all inventors, made them run give into a thouſand extravagancies and diſproportions; and in place of reaſoning upon the ideas of the firſt men who had raiſed the arts from barbarity, they loaded members upon members, interrupting the moſt eſſential, fooliſhly inventing minute and ridiculous contours, and loſing ſight of the good cha-

racter, and majeſtic proportions; ſo that they remained attached to rules, and paſſed for ſtubborn and ſtupid men.

Thus proceeded architecture even to Bernine, who, in ſpight of his licence, had a gay ſtyle. Peter of Cortona was very capricious, and Borromini extravagant, even to the moſt furious folly. From that time architecture has no longer had reins, and one believes all that lawful which one finds examples of in the aforeſaid profeſſors, from which have ariſen a variety of incredible inventions, ſome ingenious, but no work truly beautiful.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WORKS OF ANTHONY ALLEGRI,

CALLED

CORREGGIO.

MEMOIRS

CONCERNING

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ANTHONY ALLEGRI,

DENOMINATED

CORREGGIO.

VERY confuſed are the accounts which we have of the life of Correggio. Some ſay that he was born in the year 1490, and others, with more foundation, ſay that he was born four years after that date, at Correggio, or a village near it. His real name was Anthony Allegri, but he latinized it in ſigning and putting in his paintings Læti; but nevertheleſs he always was, and is known by the name of his country, Correggio. Nothing is known of his family: we know only that he was twice married, and that he had children by both wives. From the firſt was born at Correggio, Pompey, or, as others call him, Pomponio; and in Parma a daughter in 1524, and another in 1526. In the year following he had the third daughter by the ſecond wife.

There are doubts alſo of the time of his death; but it appears certain that he died the 5th March 1534, at the age of 40 years. Some ſay that he was very poor, and of low extraction; others make him rich and of noble family, and that he left a good inheritance to his ſon Pompey; but in neither the one or the other accounts have ever appeared any documents. I believe equally falſe the two extremes, and that he was rich in proportion to the country in which he lived, and the little money in circulation at that time, as one might infer from the kind of money with which we know that they paid him for his works. The authors who have written his life, have compared him with the painters who lived in great courts and rich cities, ſuch as Rome, Venice, and Florence; and have had reaſon to lament the fate of Correggio, conſidering his great merit. That however does not prove that he was not poſſeſſed of ſomething ſufficient to live in philoſophical felicity, contenting himſelf with a ſimple life, equal with that of his fellow-citizens; aſpiring to be better but not richer than them. That which is certain, is, that in his paintings one does not ſee any ſign of that economy, or avarice, which is obſervable in poor painters, or thoſe who wiſh for riches; becauſe his works are painted on good wood, on fine canvas, or on copper, and often re-touched with accuracy and ſtudy. The colours which he uſed are of the moſt choſen and difficult to practice. He employed with profuſion in the drapery, fleſh, and fields, the ultramarine, and ſtrongly impaſted the whole; a thing

which one does not ſee in any other painter. His lacca was the moſt fine, and for that reaſon we ſee it preſerved even to our time; and his green colours are ſo beautiful as not to be ſurpaſſed.

Laſtly, it is of little importance whether Correggio was poor or rich. That which evidently reſults from his works is, that his education ought to have been very good; and what P. Orlandi relates is very likely to be true, which is, that Correggio ſtudied philoſophy, mathematics, painting, architecture, ſculpture, and every ſort of erudition; and of courſe converſed with the moſt famous profeſſors of his time. In fact, in his principal works one diſcovers a very learned and poetical ſtyle of thinking; as for example, in his painting of the Education of Love, where he repreſents Venus with wings and with a bow, to ſignify that the Mother of Love, who moves the heart of men and gods, is of a celeſtial origin; and the ſame graceful allegories are to be found in all his other compoſitions, as we ſhall ſee in the deſcriptions of his paintings.

At that time flouriſhed in Modena, according to the account of Vedriani, an academy of Painting and Sculpture, which had produced ſome good artiſts; among which were Franciſco Bianchi, ſurnamed *il Frari*, and Pellegrino Munari, known by the name of *Pellegrino of Modena*.

Correggio began to learn painting of the aforeſaid Bianchi, and from thence paſſed to ſtudy under Andrew Mantegna. It is probable alſo that he ſtudied architecture, as one ſees by his works,

and here he acquired a beautiful and grand taſte; and, according to the laudable cuſtoms of that time, he applied himſelf alſo to ſculpture, but I know not if he arrived to work in marble. It is however certain that he worked in *plaſtica* and ſtucco, becauſe they ſtill preſerve in Modena, in the church of Saint Margaret, a Depoſition of Anthony Begarelli, ſculptor of Modena, and great friend of Correggio, who did with his own hand three of the figures. It is not known for certain whether Begarelli learned ſculpture from Correggio, or Correggio from Begarelli, or if they ſtudied together; but it is however certain that this is the beſt work of Begarelli, who made many others alone even to the year 1555. The aforeſaid Vedriani writes that Begarelli aſſiſted Correggio, making him the models for the celebrated work of the cupola of Parma; from whence one concludes that he ſerved him, and that the painter was not ſo poor as is generally pretended, becauſe he employed and paid a ſculptor, who in that time had the firſt reputation in Lombardy, and of whom Michael Angelo made much account. I do not pretend, by that, that Correggio was very rich: every one will think as he likes; however, I know not in our time any painter who is in a ſituation to pay a good ſculptor for making him neceſſary models of ſo vaſt a work as that of Parma.

The works are very rare to which Correggio put his name, and the date in which he did them; from whence it is very difficult to fix the epoch when he began to offer his works to the public,

or the ſtyle of his firſt labours. Among his paintings, which from Modena have paſſed to Dreſden, one only is with his ſignature, but without date; and here one diſtinguiſhes the ſtyle of his maſters, as I ſhall preſently relate. Nor is there any conſiderable work by which one can deviſe by what way he abandoned the dry manner of his maſters, and acquired that great and noble ſtyle which he always followed afterwards.

Since no one has recorded how Correggio made his ſtudies, or by what means he advanced ſo much in his profeſſion, it will be permitted me to make ſome conjecture upon the ſame.

We know that Pellegrino Munari, on hearing the fame which Raphael had acquired, propoſed to go and ſtudy under him; and, abandoning his country, went to Rome. When Pellegrino took this reſolution, Correggio then ſtudied at Modena, and probably heard the fame praiſes of Raphael and of Michael Angelo. Shall we ſay then that he was leſs ſtudious, and leſs a lover of the art and of glory, than Pellegrino? He certainly cannot ſay it who has obſerved the works of an artiſt, who even from his beginning was ſuperior to his maſters; and who imagined a mutation ſo rapid as from his firſt to his ſecond ſtyle, and who, not content with being equal to many great men, and ſuperior to all in his country, abandoned notwithſtanding that ſtyle, and undertook, by means of new ſtudies and the moſt profound meditation, to change almoſt the art of painting. By that I incline to believe that Correggio went to Rome, where he ſaw and ſtudied the works of

Raphael, and much more thoſe of Buonaroti; but being of a mild and modeſt character, and only occupied in the ſtudy of his art, he fled the amuſements of company, and the acquaintance of other painters, and by that did not ſubject himſelf to the ſtyle of any one, nor was an imitator of any one, but took beauty wherever he found it.

Some people will tell me, it is not known that ever Correggio went to Rome; but I will reply, that not knowing it does not prove that he never was there; becauſe frequently we ſee that what many people have done, is not known until they have acquired a certain reputation; and generally are known in Rome only thoſe Profeſſors who work there, and not foreigners who go there for the ſole end of ſtudy, and it is probable that Correggio was of this number; and this probability will acquire more force by other reaſons which I ſhall preſently adduce.

It appears to me incredible, that Correggio was not eſteemed in his own country, and thoſe around it, as ſome would give to underſtand; whilſt the moſt important works of his time were committed to him. The firſt cupola ever painted was that of Saint John at Parma, and the painter was Correggio, who completed it in 1522; the ſecond was that of the cathedral of the ſame city, and painted by the ſame in 1530. Theſe great works, which were committed to him, ſhew that he was reputed as the firſt painter; and that if he had not gained great honour by the firſt, he would not have been employed in the ſecond; and they would have ſought other

painters, which were not then wanting in Venice and in Lombardy itſelf. To this might be added that which Ruta ſays, that when the aforeſaid cupola was finiſhed, Correggio was paid the remainder of its price, which was 170 ſcudi of gold in copper money; and that, having carried this ſum upon his ſhoulders, it heated him and brought on a malady of which he died at the age of forty years and ſeven months, and was buried in the cloyſters of Saint Francis. According to that information, the price which they gave him for painting the cupola muſt have been much more than the ſaid ſum which remained; becauſe in a work ſo great as that, it was regular and almoſt neceſſary to have ſupplied him with different ſums in the courſe of his work. Being thus, Correggio could not have been ſo ill paid, if one conſiders the age, the country, and the value then of money; and if we compare it to the prices which were paid to Raphael (who was the beſt paid of any painter of his age) for the rooms of the Vatican, which was 1200 ſcudi of gold for each.

To that might be added what Vaſari ſays, which is, "that Duke Frederick of Mantua, wiſhing to give two paintings to Charles V. at the time of his coronation, which happened at Bologna in 1530, thought of Correggio to execute them." He ought therefore to have been a profeſſor much eſteemed, when a well-informed prince preferred him, to Giulio Romano, whom he held in his ſervice, and knew that the Emperor had Titian at his diſpoſal;

from which it might be argued, that wiſhing to make his gift more valuable, he choſe Correggio to meet better the taſte of that monarch.

I conclude from all this, that although the memoirs of the life of Correggio are ſo confuſed and uncertain, one may nevertheleſs be aſſured that he had the beſt education, and that he learnt as much as ſuited his profeſſion; and that his paintings are productions of a ſublime, delicate, and cultivated genius; becauſe every one who knows the art, and is even but ſuperficially informed, muſt be convinced that without the aforeſaid quality, it was impoſſible for Correggio to produce ſuch famous works. If he were not rich, he certainly was very generous to paint with ſo little economy as he did; and finally it appears evident to me, that he arrived to acquire great honour and reputation. But in fine it is of little conſequence whether he was noble or a plebeian, rich or poor, when we know that he was a great painter, and that his works invite one to follow him, and inſtruct us. To this effect I have gathered all the information I have been able of his paintings, which I am going to deſcribe; and although perhaps there are others which I am not acquainted with, yet theſe will be ſufficient to give an idea of his wonderful talent, which in ſo ſhort a life could produce ſo many works with ſo much ſtudy, aſſiduity and delicacy, and ſo finiſhed that only to conſider them with due accuracy it appears impoſſible to have performed them in ſo ſhort a life.

There were ſome paintings in France of the

moſt beautiful ſtyle of Correggio; and among others thoſe two which the Duke of Mantua preſented to Charles V. and which the Duke of Orleans bought of the hereditary Duke of Bracciano. One repreſents Læda, and the other Danae. The Emperor ſent theſe paintings to Prague, and had them placed in the royal palace, where they remained till the famous thirty years war, when, that city being ſacked by the Swedes, Guſtavus Adolphus ſent them to Stockholm. That king being dead, they remained unknown in the minority of Queen Chriſtina, until an ambaſſador, who knew the hiſtory, ſought after theſe paintings, and by theſe means they were traced out and found ſerving as ſhutters for the windows of a ſtable. They were repaired the beſt poſſible, and that Queen eſteemed them as they merited: ſhe carried them herſelf to Rome as precious things, and obtained previous licenſe of the Pope to take them out of the popedom whenever ſhe wiſhed. After her death they paſſed to the hands of Don Livio Odeſcalchi, among many other valuable things of that Queen, and that gentleman held them in much eſteem as long as he lived but his heirs ſelling many of his rarities, the Duke of Orleans, Regent of France, bought them and the ſtatue of Philip V. King of Spain, from whom they fell into the hands of the father of the preſent Duke, who from rigorous principles cauſed them to be deſtroyed in his preſence in order not to be deceived; and he burnt the head of Iö, another painting of Correggio, which appeared to him the moſt expreſſive. The remain-

ing pieces of that painting were collected by Charles Coypel, firſt painter to the King of France; and when he died, another French painter made it a new head; and in this ſtate a financier bought the painting, and from whom the King of Pruſſia purchaſed it at a high price. It is ſaid that the Læda had the ſame fate of the Iö; and if the Danaë is ſtill preſerved, it is, however, ſo hidden that I know not of any one who has been fortunate enough ever to have ſeen it.

The painting of Læda is more an allegory than a fable. The principal figure repreſents a woman with a ſwan in her lap, which appears as if it would wiſh to approach its bill to her lips. She is ſitting by the ſide of the water, in which ſhe has one foot. Since the fable ſuppoſes that Jove is transformed into a ſwan to enjoy Læda, this painting is called always by the name of Læda. But at the ſide of this figure one ſees an infant girl, who, with an innocent air, endeavours to defend herſelf from another ſwan, which attacks her as he is ſwimming in the water, in which is the young girl up to the ancles. Further on there is a young woman, who, in the act of being dreſſed by a ſervant, views with attention another ſwan, which flies, and appears as if departed from the place where ſhe is; and ſhe, in viewing it, ſhows ſigns of joy and ſatisfaction. Further on is the half-figure of a woman rather advanced in years, dreſſed, and in expreſſions of grief. At the other part of the principal figure is a Cupid, who, with much

grace, touches a lyre of ancient make; and there are alſo two of the Loves, who with various horns have made an inſtrument which they are ſounding. All this is repreſented with a grace of which Correggio alone was capable. The field is a grove of branched trees of various kinds; and the fore-ground is occupied by a lake of pure water, which appears a cryſtal, and extends to that part of the painting where are the aforeſaid women. All is very beautiful, and appears a painted poem, which has for object all the various accidents of love*.

The other painting of Danaë clearly repreſents that fable, but with a ſpirit truly poetical. One ſees Danaë gracefully lying down in bed: a beautiful Cupid, or be it Hymen, ſuſtains with one hand the hem of the ſheet which covers her lap, where ſhe receives the ſhower of gold in which Jove is transformed, and with the other hand ſhows her the beauties of thoſe drops, which ſhe looks at with complacency and very expreſſive pleaſure. At the feet of the bed are two Loves, who, playing, prove upon a touch-ſtone the one a drop of gold, and the other the point of an arrow; and the laſt appears of a character much more robuſt than the other, certainly to denote that love ariſes from the wound of the arrow; and that its ruin is gold. This painting is all grace, and the Hymen has the moſt beautiful countenance that can be imagined, and all

* Beſides many other copies of this painting, there is a print engraved with good taſte by Du-Change.

the figure is deſigned with ſuch elegance that no modern painter has ever exceeded it. The clare obſcure ſurpriſes, and, notwithſtanding the body is in part a little illuminated, it is ſtill ſo clear and ſo reflective, that one knows not that it is in the ſhade, which is however ſtrong, but it gives greater relief to the thighs, which receive the light, eſpecially the left thigh which has the appearance as if detached from the painting. The head of Danaë is made in imitation of the Venus of Medicis, and has the ſame kind of hair. Correggio added only the neceſſary expreſſion to his ſubject, and a character a little more youthful*.

The painting of Iö is of equal beauty, and the back of the figure is there repreſented, to avoid the act too ſcandalous which would have ariſen by making it in front; and ſince Jove is there repreſented as transformed in a cloud, any other form would have deſtroyed all the grace of the figure, ſo that it is impoſſible to imagine better a ſimilar ſubject. I ſay nothing of the expreſſion, which, if it has any defect, it is that of being too perfect and ſignificant, becauſe, as well in the head as in the ſhoulders, in the hand or in the feet, which are the parts one ſees, it is impoſſible to expreſs that laſcivious act with more heat.

After Correggio had fulfilled the part of the painter, he added that of the poet; figuring in the field a ſtag, which, in the act of drinking,

* Du-Change has alſo engraved this painting.

diſcovers all the anxiety of ſatisfying the thirſt and ardour of love.

There is a ſecond of this painting in the gallery of Vienna, accompanied by another of equal ſize, in which Correggio repreſented, the rape of Ganymede; a work full of grace, with a beautiful field in the ground, which expreſſes the objects as if one ſaw them from the height of a mountain: here one ſees the dog of Ganymede, which truly appears in the act and anxiety of wiſhing to fly to follow his maſter.

Among the things of Don Livio Odeſcalchi, was a young Cupid ſeen by the back, who makes an arch of a piece of wood leaning upon two books; and further on are two infants of half-figure, who are wreſtling; the one laughs, and the other weeps, to repreſent fortunate and unhappy love.

All theſe paintings were in the gallery of the Duke of Orleans, and came from the ſame Odeſcalchi; and there was alſo another, which being in every reſpect reſembling one I am going preſently to deſcribe, I ſhall now omit to ſpeak of it, ſaying only, that it repreſented Venus with Mercury, who is teaching Cupid to read.

The King of France poſſeſſed another painting, repreſenting the marriage of Saint Catharine, of little more than natural half-figure, with Saint Sebaſtian, and with the martyrdom of both theſe Saints figured at a diſtance. This painting has been always much admired, as one might know by ſo many copies which are done of it, and ſome by the moſt famous painters. This,

with two others, of which I have to speak, were presented by the Cardinal Anthony Barberini to Cardinal Mazarine, and has the peculiarity of being painted in distemper on canvas, with figures of four palms in height. Both are symbolical or poetical subjects, the one representing Virtue, and the other Vice. In the first is figured Virtue sitting, and armed; and by her side is another figure, which represents conjunctively the four Cardinal Virtues, with their symbols, the bridle, sword, skins of lions, and little serpents entwined in the hair. At the opposite part is another figure, which with a compass in one hand measures a globe, and with the other directed to heaven represents the Sciences; that is, the knowledge of things celestial and terrestrial. There are some figures flying above, one of which is Victory, who meets Virtue; and the other is Fame, who makes them known. All the heads are wonderfully graceful, and not less so are the motions of the figures. Of this same painting is found a second, not finished, in the gallery of Prince Doria at Rome. The companion of this represents a vicious man tormented by his passions, enthralled by pleasure, enchained by habit, and flung by remorse of conscience *.

There was done another octagon painting, where Correggio repeated the two figures of Science and Virtue of the last painting which I have described, and in the middle a shield of

* Both these paintings were engraved by Picard the Roman, and give sufficient idea of the original.

arms with ſome ſtars; but then he made upon it a kind of field; though here one knows that which had been painted under. This painting was ſold to a merchant at Berlin, to which place it was conveyed.

I have heard that in the aforeſaid gallery of the Duke of Orleans, there is another little painting aſſuredly of Correggio; which had ſerved for the ſign of an Inn, and in which is painted a Muleteer with his Mules.

The firſt work which this great man painted at Parma, was the Cupola of the Church of Saint John, of the Benedictine Fathers, and the four pedeſtals, as alſo the tribune upon the great altar. The cupola has no ſky-light, or any window at the ſides. In the middle is Chriſt in his glory, ſuſpended in air, with the twelve Apoſtles under, ſeated upon the clouds. Theſe are naked, and in a ſtyle of greatneſs which ſurpaſſes every imagination; and nevertheleſs the forms are beautiful, and ſerved as models to the Carracci's, and particularly to Lewis, in whoſe works one knows that he propoſed to imitate it. Whoever examines this painting with attention, will be induced to believe that Correggio had ſeen the works of Michael Angelo.

In the lunettes he repreſented the four Evangeliſts, with the four Doctors of the Church; and in that work it appears, that he had wiſhed to follow a ſtyle ſimilar to that of Raphael, which one ſees in the ſimplicity of the dreſſes, and in the poſtures and actions; becauſe the ſame imitate

the Socrates of the School of Athens, and an auditor of the Predication of Saint Paul in the Areopagus, who are in one of the tapeſtries of Raphael. Whoever would wiſh to be convinced of it, and cannot ſee the painting, may find it by the print engraved by Giovannini. A Saint John painted in freſco, by Correggio, upon the door of the veſtry of the ſame church, appears much more of the ſtyle of Raphael; above all in the character of the head; which, if it were found upon a piece of wall, without knowing who did it, one would take it for a work of Raphael, rather than Correggio.

The Tribune painted by Correggio was demoliſhed by the Monks to enlarge the Choir; but Hannibal Caracci being then at Parma, theſe Monks made him copy the whole with the ſame meaſure; and the Tribune being re-built, they got them copied again by Ceſar Aretuſi. The copies of the Caracci's were bought by the Pharneſian houſe, and are now in the Muſeum of Capo-di-monte at Naples. The principal group which repreſents the Madonna crowned by Jeſus Chriſt, was cut off from that building, and is preſerved in the library of the Duke of Parma.

Other ſeparate pieces paſſed through the hands of different individuals, and there are three of them at Rome, in the houſe of the Marquis Rondanini; which aſtoniſh every one who views them near, and conſiders with what excellence and facility they are executed. This work, according to Ruta, was finiſhed in the year one thouſand five hundred and twenty-two.

In the ſame church are two admirable paintings of Correggio, which are at the two ſides of the Fifth Chapel, at the right-hand. That at the left, which is towards the altar, repreſents the martyrdom of Saint Placido, and of Saint Flavia, with other Saints. Although the whole of the painting is moſt beautiful, yet that which claims particular attention is the head of the Saint, who, in the mean time that the executioner pierces her breaſt with a pike, looks ſo lovelily to heaven, that ſhe appears to care little of the martyrdom. In the oppoſite painting is Jeſus Chriſt dead, with the ſenſeleſs Mother ſupported by Saint John: here one ſees that ſhe ſuffers all the pangs of death; and the Magdaden in tears at the feet of our Lord, has the moſt beautiful expreſſion that ever can be ſeen. Theſe two paintings are on thick canvaſs, and are of a moſt beautiful colouring, much impaſted, of great force, and appear done after the cupoſa, from whence they are of a more delicate ſtyle, although not ſo finiſhed as the other works of Correggio exiſting in Parma.

Nevertheleſs Hannibal Caracci made a great account of the laſt of theſe two paintings; becauſe of all that he did of this ſubject he always took the ſame invention; and it appears that generally he applied himſelf more to the ſtyle of that work, than to the moſt ſublime that Correggio uſed in others. It is evident that he did it becauſe this was more eaſy to imitate; but it is a little feeble, and dark.

In the church of the Fathers Rocchettini, in the firſt chapel, entering on the left hand, is the painting of the altar, done on wood by Correggio in the moſt beautiful and finiſhed ſtyle. It repreſents the flight into Egypt; and as the Virgin has a baſon in her hand, it is known in the painting for the Madonna of the Baſon. Correggio uſed to employ poetical ideas as well in ſacred ſubjects, as in the profane, from whence he made a figure, but not of an angel, who pours water from a vaſe into the cup, or be it baſon, which the Madonna holds in her hand. It appears that in this manner he wiſhed to perſonify the fountain, after the manner which the ancients figured the fountains and floods; but, however, for this he did not repreſent a nymph, or any profane things. In the laſt ſtage of the painting, and in the place moſt remote, is an angel, in the act of tying an aſs, with ſuch expreſſion and grace, that perhaps it is too much for ſuch an action*.

In the church of the Annunciation of the ſame city, on entering it at the left ſide, one ſees painted in freſco, the Myſtery of the Incarnation; but it is very ill treated; by reaſon, that finding it painted in another place where it became demoliſhed, it was removed to where it now is: in ſimilar caſes it always happens, that with the new humidity, and with the ſalts of the

* This wonderful painting was ruined thirteen years ago, by a young Spaniſh painter, who, obtaining permiſſion to copy it, gave it ſo barbarous a waſh, that he ſcarcely left any colour upon the wo[illegible]

cement, is formed upon a painting in freſco a kind of tartar which ſpreads over it, and makes it appear diſcoloured.

In the church of *Madonna della Scala* is a painting of Correggio, in freſco, of the Madonna and the child in her arms, of half figure, but very much ſmoked, and almoſt ruined.

The celebrated painting of Correggio, which is now admired in the Academy of Parma, was in the church of Saint Anthony of the Fire. The eulogy which Hannibal Caracci gives it, and which one may read in a letter printed among the *Pitture*, and publiſhed by Monſignor Bottari, ought to be ſufficient, being of a painter ſo intelligent; but he who has ſeen that painting, will feel ſuch impreſſion from it, as not to be able to ſpeak of it but with particular affection. This painting, therefore, like many others, was done for the devotion of one, who wiſhed to have various Saints together without forming a hiſtory, or particular ſubject. One ought not, however, to accuſe Painters and Amateurs, of Anachroniſm, from ſeeing paintings which repreſent kinds of ſpiritual viſions, with which mixedly are united various Saints, for whom, him who orders the work has particular devotion. From whence in this painting, is repreſented with the higheſt excellence, the Bleſſed Virgin and Child; by the ſide, Saint Jerom with a book, as if he would preſent to Je us his writings; and between this Saint and the Child, is an Angel, in the act of pointing out in the ſaid book ſome paſſage of ſcripture, and ſpeaks with Saint

Jerom in a ſmiling air. The figure of this Doctor is naked, except a kind of violet ſaſh, and a piece of red cloth, which covers him a little; but the ſhoulders are left uncovered, and the right arm and leg: all this is moſt beautiful, and deſigned with perfect anatomical knowledge, and of wonderful colouring. At the part oppoſite is the Magdalen, who with the right-hand takes the left-foot of the child, in the act of kiſſing it, and, turning the face as wiſhing to careſs it, has ſuch grace as Correggio alone was capable of imagining. Beyond the Magdalen, is an angel ſmelling a vaſe, to ſignify the offer of an unguent of the Magdalen to Chriſt. Among the beautiful paintings of Correggio, this is almoſt the moſt beautiful, and one can only compare to it the little Magdalen, and the famous Night, of which I ſhall treat in their places. With regard to the ſtyle in which this painting is executed, it is to be known that it is ſo well impaſted, and has a richneſs of colour which is not to be ſeen in any other, and at the ſame time it is done with ſuch clearneſs as is very difficult to preſerve in uſing ſo much colour; but the moſt difficulty in this kind of painting, thus impaſted, is the variety of the tints, and in ſeeing that the colours appear as if not laid on by the pencil, but as if they had been infuſed together after the manner of wax upon a fire. Although the whole of this painting is wonderful, yet the head of the Magdalen exceeds in beauty all the reſt, and one might ſay that he who has not ſeen it, does not know to what the art of painting ca

arrive; becauſe in that is found the expreſſion, and the preciſion of Raphael; the tints of Titian; the impaſting of Giorgione; that truth and characteriſtic exactneſs which one ſees in the little variety of the forms, and of the tints of the portraits of Vandyke; the grandeur of Guido, and the gayneſs of Paolo Veroneſe: all however is preſented to the ſight with ſuch tenderneſs and delicacy as the great Correggio alone could poſſeſs; as no other has ever been able to imitate him, or even to copy him; becauſe the copies which the moſt able painters have made of this painting are, when compared to the original, like fire in compariſon to the ſun.

The cupola of the Cathedral of Parma, in which Correggio repreſented the Aſſumption of our Lady, is the moſt beautiful of all the cupolas that have been painted before or after him; but now it is ſo ſmoked, and ſpoiled, that one can ſcarcely retrace its excellence. Its figure is octagonal, and the angles are diminiſhed according as they ariſe. It is ſhut up without a lantern, and in its place is painted with violent foreſhortening, Jeſus Chriſt who comes to meet his mother. Below are many Saints, in wonderful foreſhortening; from whence comes the principal group of the Aſſumption of the Virgin Mary carried by many angels, ſome ſuſtaining the robes, and others ſounding various inſtruments. All that takes but the half of the ſuperior of the cupola. In the inferior there are windows almoſt circular; and for that reaſon, Correggio feigned there a kind of ſock, which is repreſented as at a

diſtance, and leaves room for the Apoſtles between the windows, ſome ſingle, and others two together; and notwithſtanding ſome fall upon the ſame line of the angles, they are ſtill ſo well diſpoſed, and foreſhortened, that they never offend the ſight, and appear planted vertically upon the cornice. Upon the ſaid ſock are diſpoſed two youths in the ſtyle of angels, but without wings, lighting torches, and others are with cenſers and vaſes; from whence theſe unite the inferior compoſitions with the ſuperior, becauſe they are of a leſſer proportion than the Apoſtles and the Madonna; the whole together form an admirable variety of grandeur and lightneſs. In the four angles, or lunettes, he figured four great niches, which contribute much to the good effect; becauſe, ſuppoſing that the light comes from the aperture above, and that they leave the ſuperior part of the ſaid niches obſcure, it illuminates to the contrary the figures, forming a contraſt with the ſhade of the field.

In theſe four angles, Correggio painted four holy patrons of the city. Saint Thomas, Saint Ilarius, Saint Bernard, and Saint John the Baptiſt, ſeated upon clouds, and accompanied by angels, who ſupport and play with their attributes. In all this work, and particularly in the lunettes, is all the grace imaginable, and the greateſt knowledge of clare obſcure; and if one conſiders that the whole is painted in freſco, the wonder will more increaſe. We know that Correggio made in relief all the models of the figures which he painted in that cupola, in which aſſiſted his

friend Begarelli; the only means by which he could have executed that work with the perfection he did; and which was his laſt; and characteriſed more that profeſſor than he had ever been before.

Modena once poſſeſſed treaſures of Correggio, but they were ſent to Dreſden when the late Duke of Modena ſold all the beſt paintings of his gallery to Auguſtus the third King of Poland, who bought one hundred paintings at the price of one hundred and thirty thouſand zecchini, which were coined on purpoſe at Venice.

Among theſe paintings ſix were of Correggio. Five are the moſt beautiful he ever did; and the ſixth, which is the inferior one, is alſo very precious, becauſe it ſhews in what ſtate painting was when that profeſſor came to the world. It is a large piece, with figures of natural ſize, which repreſent the Madonna with the Child ſeated upon a kind of throne, in the middle of a body of architecture of the Ionic order, of a character ſufficiently grand, and he feigned an arch behind the Virgin, with a few heads of infants, and two intire, repreſenting Angels, but without wings. At one part are Saint John the Baptiſt, and Saint Catherine, and at the other Saint Francis, and Saint Anthony of Padua. This work is well preſerved, and is of much force; and although it has a little of harſhneſs in the contours, it is notwithſtanding ſmooth, and well painted in the interior parts of the figures. The colouring is true, and rich; of a ſtyle between that of Peruginus, and Leonardo da Vinci; and in particular

the head of the Virgin approaches much the ſtyle and character of the laſt, eſpecially in the cheeks and in the ſmiling countenance. The folds appear ſomething as if done by Mantegna; that is in the mode of encircling the member; but they are leſs dry and more grand. The compoſition is done with all the good reaſonings of variety and contraſt. In ſhort, if Correggio had more maintained that ſtyle, it would have been ſufficient for him to have equalled in merit either Ghirlandajo, Bellino, Mantegna, or Perugino; but he obſcured it all with the new taſte with which he perfected the art.

It appears that Correggio abandoned not his firſt dry ſtyle by degrees, but that in an inſtant he advanced to perfection. I do not know for certain from whence that aroſe, but I will give my conjectures upon the ſame.

In the ſame collection is a portrait of half figure, painted on wood, of a man who holds in his hand a book. Whilſt he was at Modena this portrait was known for the Phyſician of Correggio. The colouring and impaſting are beautiful enough; but I incline to believe, that it was painted at the ſame time of the Cupola of Saint John, when the Author had not yet finiſhed all the ſtudy which he did afterwards in the minor forms, and in the variety of tints. To give an idea of the ſtyle of that painting, I would compare it to that of Giorgione; but more pallid, and of inferior colouring, although equally impaſted, and a little more clear.

The third painting, which is in Saxony, is

known by the name of Saint George, and ſhows the great application of Correggio, and his ſtudy always to advance in the art. This work, according to the account of Vaſari, was made for the Brethren of Saint Peter the Martyr, at Modena, and had a body of architecture painted on the wall around it, as is ſeen by the original deſign in the poſſeſſion of Monſieur Mariette at Paris. This is a work of extraordinary finiſh, of great ſoftneſs, excellently well impaſted, and in the whole is very pleaſing. The compoſition, however, is a little interrupted; the figures have moſt beautiful movements; and the deſign is of a moſt grand character; the drapery is much ſtudied, and all is executed with great attention. One knows that Correggio took here all his parts from Nature, and formed them in ſmall models, from whence he copied the little parts, which he choſe for the clare obſcure, as one ſees more particularly in the Children who play with the helmet of Saint George; becauſe the Saints, forming their ſhade, have all thoſe accidents of light, which could only be obſerved by the models, it not being poſſible that children could ſit all the time that was neceſſary for ſuch obſervations; from whence I am confirmed in the opinion, that before Correggio executed this work he applied himſelf to modelling. In this painting is the Virgin ſeated on a kind of throne, or pedeſtal, ſuſtained by two golden Children; and at the ſides are the four Saints, George, John the Baptiſt, Jeminian, and Peter the Martyr. This laſt is in the act of interceding for the devout. St.

Jeminian preſents the Child a Model of a Church, ſupported by a Child of divine beauty. The Child Jeſus ſhows pleaſed at the preſent, by extending his arms to receive it. The grace and ſweetneſs with which this Child is conceived, deſigned, and painted, cannot be expreſſed. More in the foreground of the painting, is the young Saint John the Baptiſt, of ſeventeen or eighteen years old, which I ſuppoſe was done by Correggio to give more grace to the compoſition, by contraſting the characters of the figures. That of Saint John is deſigned with wonderful knowledge of nudity. The anatomy is well ſtudied, and expreſſed with the ſingular grace of Correggio. He has the head turned to the people, pointing with the right-hand to Jeſus Chriſt; and it appears that he ſays, *Ecce Agnus Dei.* A little forwarder, and half turning his ſhoulders, is Saint George, of the moſt beautiful and grand ſtyle that one can imagine in an heroical character. In the foreground is a Child, who holds in his hand the Sword of the Saint, and one does not ſee the points of his toes, ſuppoſing them hid by the Table of the Altar.

The other Painting which ſucceeds to that, bears the name of Saint Sebaſtian; and although the aforeſaid of Saint George is ſo aſtoniſhing, many intelligent perſons find in the compoſition of this ſomething preferable, which approaches more the modern ſtyle. Certainly, few works of Correggio (except the famous Night) have ſo much effect as that. It is probable that it was done for ſome religious offering of the city of Mo-

dena, in the time of the plague; but we know not from what Church it was taken, by ſome one of the Dukes, to put it into his gallery. We know only that it was there much before that of Saint George. It repreſents the Madonna in glory among the Clouds, with the Child in her arms brightened by the beams of the Sun, and various Angels. On the ground are Saint Jeminian, Saint Roque, and Saint Sebaſtian. The effect of that painting is admirable, and ſhows to what degree Correggio poſſeſſed the art of clare-obſcure, and the diſtribution of colours. The firſt thing which ſurpriſes one in viewing it, is the light of the Glory, which effectively appears a Sun; and above all it is only of one colour, which is a rather clear yellow, and the border of the Painting is more dark. It appears that the Madonna and Child come forth from the body of light, as if it were an obſcure ground. The Madonna is dreſſed in roſe colour, very vivid, as if covered with lacre, with a mantle of dark blue. The fleſh of the Mother and Child have but little degree of light, which adds infinitely to the good effect, becauſe it maintains the group in its true diſtance. The two Angels at the ſide are oppoſed to the clear field with leſs force, and are ſitting upon rather dark clouds, which augments more their grace, and that of the other various Angels which are among them. One of the aforeſaid Angels of the Throne appears to be ſpeaking with Saint Roque, and the other with Saint Sebaſtian, indicating to them that it was neceſſary to have re-

courſe to Jeſus, who gives ſigns with his hand to accept the ſupplication.

Under that celeſtial group is a little hillock, whoſe colour unites with that of the clouds, which leaves but a ſmall aperture by which one diſcovers a little of the country. At the left hand over Saint Roque, the obſcurity of the clouds and the mountain make a field to the figures below, which is in the firſt place Saint Jeminian, who in a golden pluvial lined with a very beautiful green, and in a white alb, forms the principal point of the light; but ſince that and the other lights are ſmall, they advance the objects without prejudice to the maſs of clare of the glorious group.

On the other ſide one ſees Saint Sebaſtian on foot, tied to a tree, in the act of interceding for the infected: he is naked even to the girdle, and the tints wonderfully attach the inferior parts to the ſuperior of the compoſition: At the ſide of Saint Jeminian, is Saint Roque leaning the right arm and head upon the mountain, as if abandoned and infected by the plague. At the part which is above that Saint the clouds make a ſhade, but all with reflective light, as correſponds to each ſhade in the open field. This accident, wonderfully aids the repoſe of the ſight, and the variety: contraſting with Saint Sebaſtian, who is illuminated in the breaſt and ſhouklers, whilſt Saint Roque is illuminated only in the thighs, and in that manner it is relieved from a diſagreeable uniformity. At the feet of Saint Jeminian is a girl of twelve or thirteen years of age, who holds

in her hand a little edifice with a tower, like a little church, repreſenting, as ſome think, the city of Modena, of which that Saint is the patron. This figure has all the grace of Correggio. It is remarkable that all the Angels of this painting are without wings *. In this ſame gallery is the celebrated painting of the Penitent Magdalen; in height little more than a palm; and in length leſs than a palm and an half. This ſole image contains all the beauty which can be imagined in painting, for the diligence with which it is executed, the impaſting of the colours, the ſoftneſs, grace, and knowledge in the clare obſcure. Correggio figured the whole obſcure, and ſhaded, except the naked part of the Saint. The head is of half tint, but illuminated by the reflection which comes from the arm, and a book which he is reading. The field, although obſcure, is equally beautiful, and feigns a ſpacious place, ſuch as the bottom of a grotto, and of a valley, with trees and verdure. In ſhort, if the other paintings of Correggio are excellent, this is wonderfully ſo. The hair of the Saint, beſides the ſoftneſs with which it is done, by appearing as if the colours were melted to make it, gives ſo perfect an idea of what it is, as if the hairs were painted one by one, and have even the luſtre of natural hair. In the ſale, this painting was valued at twenty-ſeven thouſand Roman ſcudi.

* This painting had ſuffered ſome damage, which was augmented in carrying it from Modena to Dreſden; but, with the great care that they had to preſerve the fragments, it was excellently repaired by Signor Sedriz, painter to King Auguſtus.

The ſixth and laſt painting, which the King of Poland bought, is the moſt celebrated of all, known to the world by the name of *la Notte di Correggio*, and repreſents the Birth of our Lord. This work was done by Correggio for Alberto Pratonieri, as appears by the agreement which he made in 1522, when he finiſhed the Cupola of Saint John at Parma; but this painting was not finiſhed until the year 1527. Perhaps this delay ſerved him to ſtudy more the effect of clare obſcure, wiſhing to make the light come ſolely from the child; a thing which, until then, only Raphael had imagined; nor ſhould I be ſurpriſed if, with this ſtudy, and by modelling all his compoſitions, Correggio then found his beautiful clare obſcure, and that wonderful foreſhortening which he diſplayed in the celebrated Cupola in the Cathedral, which was his laſt and moſt glorious work.

This painting, the *Night*, is in the aforeſaid gallery of Dreſden, and very well preſerved; and is one of thoſe paintings which moves the heart of him who views it, whether he be intelligent or ignorant in the art, but much more that of the firſt. The imitation of Truth is executed with ſuch artifice, that it loſes every idea of itſelf, art is there ſo well hid, that it appears done with the greateſt facility. The compoſition is ſimple, but hides the moſt ſingular art, by ſhowing in a very ſmall ſpace, a field ſufficiently great, with a diſtance that appears truly as if one ſaw a melancholy and miſerable place, but ornamented with a horizon where one ſees the dawn of the day, which enlivens all the reſt. At a diſtance are

ſome ſhepherds, which one ſcarcely diſtinguiſhes, and among them and the Madonna is Saint Joſeph, in the act of leading the Aſs, whoſe figure enlarges the place, ſhowing the diſtance that there is between that and the Virgin, and of the other parts, even to the ſhepherds. It appears at firſt ſight, that the ſituation of the Virgin might have been better ſtudied, becauſe the head is inclined towards the child, in a manner that one cannot ſee all the face; but conſidering it better, one knows that it was not poſſible to make one part better, without taking much from the grace. Correggio inclined that head, in order that the light which comes from below, ſhould not produce a ſhade in the parts above, which would have injured the beauty of the face. The child is alſo placed with particular care, becauſe it is taken obliquely, in a manner that one can ſcarcely ſee the face, although one ſees the hands and the feet; and theſe I believe were made by Correggio, purpoſely to avoid expreſſing the natural form of children juſt born, which is not very pleaſing, becauſe we are not uſed to ſee it; and this ought to ſerve as an example, to avoid that which is not beautiful in Nature, rather than to alter the Truth; making beautiful that which is not ſo in itſelf. Perhaps for the ſame reaſon he almoſt hid the face of an old ſhepherd, who is in the firſt ſtage, placing him before another who is more youthful and beautiful, and who with a motion full of joy, appears to ſpeak of this ſucceſs to the old man. A Shepherdeſs who has two turtles in a little baſket, ſhows that one never tires

to ſee the young Jeſus, and that ſhe did not know how to depart; and covered her face with her hand to hide herſelf from his ſplendor. In the upper part of the painting, oppoſite to the Madonna, is a Glory with Angels illuminated equal to the child; where Correggio placed the ſecond light, but not ſo perfect as that of the Madonna, and made the ſhade more ſoft, as if it were reflected, or comprifed in a kind of maſs of light, perhaps to make known that they are ſpirits. The beauty, grace, and delicacy of that painting are admirable, and executed in different ſtyles, according as it agrees to each of them.

In the collection of the paintings of Count Bruhl, who was prime miniſter to the aforeſaid Auguſtus III. King of Poland, is a little painting of ſomething more than one palm in height and a little leſs in width, which repreſents the nuptials of Saint Catherine. It is painted on canvaſs upon board, and on the back there is an inſcription in ancient character, *Laus Deo. Per Donna Matilde d'Eſte. Antonio Lieto da Correggio fec il preſente quadro per ſua devozione anno* 151 . If this inſcription be genuine, this muſt have been one of the firſt works of his ſecond ſtyle. It is certain that it is a moſt beautiful painting.

Among the paintings which were of the Duke of Parma, and which are now at *Capo di Monte* at Naples, one is entirely ſimilar to the aforeſaid, nor can one doubt but both are of Correggio; becauſe among the infinite copies which different great painters have taken of it, and among others

Hannibal Caracci, there is no one which approaches the original. This ought to have been much eſteemed even from the time it was finiſhed, becauſe it was engraved by Hugh da Carpi, who was almoſt contemporary with Correggio.

Returning to the Gallery of Saxony, there is alſo a painting of the Bleſſed Virgin, of half figure, with the child ſleeping in her arms, which was engraved by the celebrated Edelink, who believed it to be of Correggio; but we know for certain that it is of Sebaſtian Ricci the Venetian, who with a view of impoſture made it paſs for a work of Correggio, by imitating his manner, and by giving it a certain caſt of antiquity. But by examining it attentively, even the print diſcovers the impoſture; becauſe in place of grace there is only affectation, and in the clare obſcure only falſification.

There is likewiſe another painting in the ſaid gallery which is aſſerted to be of Correggio, by him who engraved it at Rome. It repreſents the Madonna and Child ſitting at the foot of a palm tree, and an angel in air: it is known by the name of the *Zingarella* of Correggio. Cardinal Alexander Albani made a preſent of it to King Auguſtus. Notwithſtanding that, there are people who doubt its being original, and we know for certain there is another on the ſame ſubject, aſſuredly of Correggio, and which came from the gallery of Parma to Capo di Monte; but having been very ill treated, it was repainted by a modern hand; ſo that one may ſay it no longer

exiſts; becauſe we no more behold in it any thing of Correggio *.

Alſo at Florence are found ſome works of Correggio. The largeſt is preſerved in the palace of Pitti, and appears to have ſerved for an altar piece. It is on wood; and the figures are almoſt of natural ſize. There is the Madonna, and Child in her arms, who has a globe of the world in his hand; and Saint Chriſtopher in the act of receiving him upon his ſhoulders.

At the feet of the Madonna is Saint John the Baptiſt, and oppoſite to Saint Chriſtopher is Saint Michael. This painting has always paſſed as a work of Correggio: but it is certain that it is of a particular ſtyle, and little reſembles the beautiful works of that famous author; although in the compoſition it partakes ſomething of his ſtyle. If any one would wiſh to maintain that this is a work of Correggio, he would be obliged to confeſs, that it is not a complete work, becauſe there are many harſh things in it, and no delicacy. To me nevertheleſs it appears, that it is a finiſhed work, becauſe we ſee in it certain things which painters uſe only in finiſhing their paintings; from whence one might conjecture,

* A Parmazan Ex-jeſuit, in the act of the extinction of his order, ſaved a painting of the ſame ſubject, and ſold it afterwards to Prince Chigi of Rome. It is undoubtedly an original of Correggio as well as that of Capo di Monte. The field has ſuffered much; and has alſo been retouched, particularly in the drapery. The head of the Madonna, the foot, and the child, which are well deſcribed, are painted ſo divinely, that perhaps the world does not produce again any thing ſo beautiful.

that Correggio had left that work imperfect, and that ſome other painter finiſhed it; or, if he finiſhed it himſelf, he ſought to imitate the Venetian ſchool. There are many perſons who abſolutely deny it to be a painting of Correggio: however, I do not hazard to determine who elſe could have made ſo many beautiful things as it contains.

In the ſame gallery is a beautiful head painted on wood; and although it is only a firſt ſketch, it is nevertheleſs ſo beautifully impaſted and coloured, as to give every delight. This head is in every reſpect ſimilar to the other of that girl who holds in her hand a model of a church at the feet of Saint Geminian, of the aforeſaid painting of Saint Sebaſtian which is at Dreiden.

The Grand Duke of Tuſcany poſſeſſes alſo another painting on canvaſs, five palms in height, repreſenting the Madonna on her knees with the child juſt born lying on the ground upon a corner of the mantle, without any other figure. This is not the moſt beautiful of the works of Correggio, becauſe the compoſition and drapery are but little ſtudied. The head and the hands of the Madonna are painted wonderfully; but with leſs force than the other claſſical works of our author.

In Rome, in the gallery of the houſe of Colonna, is preſerved a painting of Correggio on wood, which repreſents an *Ecce Homo*, with the Virgin who faints behind a Soldier, and at a diſtance is Pilate; all half figures. This painting belonged to Count Prati of Parma, and appears rather of

the ſecond ſtyle of Correggio than of his higheſt and moſt ſtudied ſtyle; but nevertheleſs it is moſt beautiful, of a good character of deſign, ſingularly impaſted, and of good colouring. Auſtin Caracci engraved it.

In the palace of Prince Doria Panphily at Rome, among other excellent paintings, is preſerved one of Correggio not complete, painted in diſtemper upon canvaſs, whoſe compoſition is Heroical Virtue crowned by Glory, as I have deſcribed when treating of the paintings of France. If this painting is not to be compared to the higheſt perfection of the other moſt excellent works in oil of Correggio, it ſhews, at leaſt, his great knowledge and merit, and his quickneſs in painting; and it ſhews alſo that his grace and excellence ariſe not from the length of time which he employed in his works, nor in the repeated impaſting of the colours, but in the conſtant ſyſtem of having always preſent the effects of truth; becauſe although one ſees in that painting, that in ſome parts it is only ſketched with white and black rather lightly, yet it has all the grace of things finiſhed, and with all the knowledge they require. In other parts where there is a little of colour, one ſees the idea of truth, and above all the great knowledge of the foreſhortenings is ſurpriſing, eſpecially in thoſe parts where any muſcle or fleſh is eminent; becauſe then it goes gradually hiding the other ſucceſſive parts, and clearing the labyrinth of the forms, which is a thing very difficult; from whence, if there are other paintings more beau-

tiful and finiſhed, in no one like that does one ſee better the wonderful merit of Correggio.

The houſe of Barberini anciently poſſeſſed a ſmall painting, repreſenting that paſſage in the Evangeliſt Saint Mark, which ſays, "And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth, caſt about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him; and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." They ſay that this painting went from one hand to another, and at laſt remained in England; but lately has been ſeen in Rome another ſimilar, in poſſeſſion of an Engliſhman. The only difference which appears between them is, that the laſt is painted on canvaſs, and appears the ſtudy and ſketch of the other, becauſe here one diſcovers ſome corrections; a thing which is rare in the paintings of Correggio. Nevertheleſs the figure of the youth is very well finiſhed, and is beautifully impaſted and colored, and above all is ſingular in the expreſſion and the manner in which he endeavoured to extricate himſelf from his clothes. The Soldier who wiſhes to arreſt him ſeizes the clothes with his right hand, and with the left makes a ſign more to call him than to arreſt him, and it appears that he would wiſh to perſuade him friendly not to fly: this expreſſion explains the character of Correggio, led always by the actions leaſt harſh and violent. From afar one ſees the arreſt of Chriſt in the act when Judas kiſſes him, and St. Peter who cuts off the ear of Malcus. The perſpective and clare obſcure of this painting are of the beſt

ſtyle of Correggio; but that which one here knows clearly to be the moſt ſingular is, that he had preſent the figure of the eldeſt ſon of Laocoon when he made that of the youth; becauſe the head and all the characters of his perſon reſemble him; only the form is more grand, according to the ſtyle of Correggio.

In Saint Louis of the French in Rome, there is a little painting of one palm and an half, which, they ſay, is of Correggio; and repreſents the Madonna of half figure, and the child entire, Saint Joſeph, and two Angels. To me this appears a work of Julius Ceſar Procaccini.

A few years ago was found at Rome, in the poſſeſſion of a dealer in paintings, one which repreſented the Madonna and Child, and with a little Angel, very like one which was engraved by Spier, with the ſole difference that this is round, and the other was a ſquare long. This painting was covered with a thick varniſh which much obſcured and hid the beauty of the painting: for that reaſon it was ſold at a vile price to one Caſanova, a Venetian, who cleaned it very well, but not without injuring that flower of the colours moſt adherent to the varniſh. The poſſeſſor carried that painting for ſale to Dreſden, where probably it is now to be found.

The King of Spain poſſeſſes two ſmall paintings of Correggio. The firſt repreſents Jeſus Chriſt praying in the garden, with an Angel on high, who, with the left hand, points to him the croſs, and the crown of thorns, which are in ſhade upon the ground, and one ſcarcely diſcovers

them; and with the right ſhews, in graceful foreſhortening, the Heavens, as if he ſaid it to be the will of the Father that he ſhould accept the paſſions: in fact, one ſees that our Lord, with open arms, ſhews to accept it. The moſt ſingular part of this piece, beſides the excellent execution of the painting, is the ſtyle with which is managed the clare obſcure; becauſe he figured there that Chriſt received the light from Heaven, and to the contrary the Angel from Chriſt. At a diſtance, and in the loweſt place, are three Diſciples in the moſt beautiful and graceful attitudes, and further on is the crowd of the miniſters of the arreſt. They relate that Correggio gave that painting to his apothecary for four crowns, which he was indebted to him for medicine; and that a little after it was ſold for five hundred; and finally Count Pyrrus Viſconti ſold it to the Marquis of Camarena, governor of Milan, for ſeven hundred and fifty gold doubloons, who bought it in commiſſion for Philip IV. It is preſerved at preſent in the Royal Palace at Madrid, with the eſteem that it merits; and it is no ways injured, as ſome have falſely ſuppoſed.

The ſecond painting repreſents the Madonna who dreſſes the Child; a work of a ſtyle leſs complete, but nevertheleſs ſufficiently beautiful, wonderfully impaſted, and of admirable delicacy. At a diſtance is Saint Joſeph, planing a board, ſo well degraded in the contours, that it ſhews plainly Correggio was a very great maſter in the knowledge of that part of painting which they call *aërial perſpective*; becauſe the things which he

wiſhed to repreſent as ſeen at a diſtance, he has not only ſhaded lighter than the painters do at preſent, but he has diminiſhed alſo the lights, lightened the contours, and confuſed the forms by means of the diſtance; and all without ever departing from the limits of truth.

The Duke of Alva has a painting of Correggio, of figures little leſs than natural, painted on canvaſs, and repreſents Mercury, who teaches Cupid to read in the preſence of Venus. This laſt figure has the peculiarity of having wings, and a bow in the left hand: it is beautiful, and one plainly diſcovers that Correggio, in executing it, had preſent the Apollo of the Villa of Medici, which is now at Florence. The Cupid expreſſes all the innocence of his age: the hair is rich and wonderfully executed; it appears that one ſees the epidermis; and it is finiſhed without appearing dry. His little wings are like thoſe of neſtling birds, who ſtill leave the ſkin viſible, and the quills of the feathers. Whenever Correggio painted wings, he attached them in the ſame manner as in this painting, placing them immediately behind the ſhoulders, in a manner that they united ſo well with the fleſh, that they effectively appeared as a member united with the ſuperior part of the acromion; from whence the deceaſed Duke, who was the poſſeſſor of that painting, was right in telling me that the wings of that Cupid were ſo well ſituated, that if it were poſſible that a child could be born with wings, he could not have them in any other manner.

Generally other painters who make wings, at-

tach them ſo careleſsly, that they appear truly fictitious. Mercury is repreſented as a youth who has not yet done growing, and of an innocent character. That painting is undoubtedly original; not only becauſe it diſcovers the ſovereign excellence of Correggio, but alſo for a correction ſufficiently viſible in the arm of Mercury, that was originally covered with a blue cloth; and one diſtinguiſhes it, as the colour appears through that which was afterwards laid over it. I mention this circumſtance becauſe there exiſts another ſimilar in France, which has not this correction, and might be a copy, or a ſecond. This of the Duke of Alva was bought by one of his anceſtors at London, together with an aſſortment of the famous Arazzi of Raphael, at the ſale of the furniture of the unhappy Charles I. after he was beheaded.

In the grand veſtry of the Eſcurial, is preſerved a painting on canvaſs, of figures three palms in height, and repreſents Chriſt with the Magdalen, when he ſays to her, *Noli me tangere*. This is a painting of the ſame ſtyle of that of the Madonna and Child, which is at Florence, and of which I have already given the deſcription.

REFLECTIONS

UPON THE

EXCELLENCE OF CORREGGIO.

IMITATION, which is the greateſt difficulty of the art, having been conquered by ſome able profeſſors, ſuch as Maſaccio, John Bellino, and Andrew Mantegna, who found the mode of expreſſing the different plains, foreſhortenings, and back grounds; thoſe who came after, ſuch as Leonardo da Vinci, Peter Peruginus, Ghirlandajo, and Father Bartholomew of Saint Mark, found leſs obſtacles. The two firſt added a certain grace, the third a little more knowledge in the compoſition, and the laſt a majeſty and artifice in the clare obſcure and drapery, which was till then unknown. But ſince nothing in this world is invented and perfected at the ſame time, the aforeſaid artiſts could not follow that eaſe (the ſure counterſign of perfection in the art), to which afterwards arrived in different degrees Michael Angelo, Titian, Giorgione, and the divine Raphael, who in himſelf alone re-united all the merits which his predeceſſors had poſſeſſed in ſeparate parts, and reduced painting to the higheſt degree

of perfection under the appearance of eaſe. It does great honour to mankind, that with ſuch a genius and ſuch vile materials as ſimple earths, diſtempered and extended upon a plain ſurface, he could know how to imitate all the works of the Creator, and the effects and paſſions of mankind.

But although painting was arrived to a degree ſo eminent, by the terrible forms of Michael Angelo, by the true tones of the colouring of Titian, and by the perfect expreſſion and natural grace of Raphael, it wanted notwithſtanding, always ſomething, that is to ſay, a complex of different excellencies, which is the extreme of human perfection. This complex is in Correggio, who to grandeur and truth united a certain elegance, which generally bears the name of taſte, and which ſignifies the proper and determinate character of things, excluding all the indifferent parts, ſuch as the inſipid and uſeleſs.

Correggio was the firſt who painted with the view of delighting the ſight and the ſouls of ſpectators, and directed all the parts of painting to this end. However, as every painter endeavours in his works to content himſelf, and to imprint in it his genius, one might conjecture, that Correggio poſſeſſed very delicate ſenſibility, a tender and affectionate heart, and a deciſive averſion to things rough and harſh; ſo that if others had painted to ſatisfy their minds, he laboured for the ſatisfaction of his heart, and according to his own ſenſations; from whence he became in the whole the painter of the Graces. No

one, either before or after, has arrived like him to the art of the touch of the pencil; but above all, he has ſucceeded wonderfully in the knowledge of clare obſcure, and in giving relief to things, having eaſily found the juſt medium between the powerful ſtyle and the terrible, or the pleaſing and weak; among the ſpacious and plain, and little relieved ſtyle, and that which contracts too much the lights, and degenerates into minutiæ. Finally, none knew like him how to unite light and ſhade. He underſtood the degradations of theſe, and their reflections in the ſhade, without affectation, becauſe he employed them in a manner, as if the bodies had been mirrors.

The inventions of Correggio are ingenious and beautiful, and often poetical, and his compoſitions are always founded on truth, and the good effect of clare obſcure, ſo that from the firſt lines he began to introduce it with the colours, thinking not only of the imitation of truth, but of the diſtribution of all the parts which ought to enter into his works. To this end, I believe, he painted his ſketches in colours, holding as a principal view the appearance which a painting makes at firſt ſight, becauſe the other parts of painting can convince, but not perſuade one of the goodneſs of a work, when it does not pleaſe. It appears that he did not regard ſo much certain rules, which have ſo much credit in the modern ſchools, although he punctually obſerved all that which reſpects the contrapoſition, and the contraſt of the figures and their members; ſo it appears, that continued variety was his fundamental

rule, which he obſerved not in theſe and other parts, but in the whole.

With regard to the contraſt and the variety of the directions of the members, one ſees by his moſt perfect works, that always when he could, he gave to theſe members a little foreſhortening, and ſeldom made his ſurfaces parallel; which gives a wonderful effect to all his compoſitions.

It is neceſſary however to confeſs, that ſometimes (although ſeldom) ſearching with too much earneſtneſs the variety of the ſituations, particularly that of the hands, gave him a certain affectation of grace which does not appear natural; a defect which Raphael always avoided.

Some have taxed Correggio with little exactneſs of deſign; which is, rigorouſly ſpeaking, a falſe accuſation.

It is however true that he did not chooſe the objects in forms ſo ſimple as the ancients, nor the muſcles ſo marked as Michael Angelo, nor made pomp of the knowledge of nudity, like the Florentine School. Except that, he deſigned moſt correctly the objects he had to repreſent, nor in any of his original works does one find any thing which one might call incorrect.

Above all, it will be ſufficient to eternalize his glory, that the Caraccis, and particularly Hannibal and Lewis, formed their ſtyle of deſign upon that of Correggio, as one might ſee by all the works that they did before they came to Rome.

It appears as if Correggio had conſidered all the forms of nature, which were not altered by

artifice, as if they were compoſed of curved, concave, and convex lines, and that they could vary only in their ſize or proportions; ſo that he avoided all that which was angular, and in conſequence, minutiæ and dryneſs, in which error generally fell the painters of the anterior ſchools. Avoiding therefore ſtraight lines, he choſe almoſt always the curved or ſerpentine, like the letter S; and with that he thought to give greater grace; having without doubt obſerved, that the difference between the dry and beautiful ſtyle of the ancients is principally becauſe the contours and the forms of the firſt are compoſed of ſtraight, and ſome curved and convex lines, whilſt the ſecond is ſolely varied with curves: nor did the ancients do this from caprice, or from predilection of taſte, but from the preciſe imitation of truth, and the knowledge of anatomy and the ſtructure of the human body, where the obliqueneſs of the muſcles, and the variety of their poſitions upon the tortuoſity of the bone, form that alternative of curve: and ſince fleſhy and muſcular bodies have always more convex forms, and theſe larger in the concave, to the contrary the feeble have leſs convexity, and the greateſt concavity; for that reaſon Correggio preferred the middle way, without ever departing by that from truth.

It is not eaſy to determine if the knowledge of clare obſcure, and the imitation of truth in that part have conducted Correggio to the knowledge of the forms and contours, and of their interior; and if by any other way, or by the ſtudy of that

principal part of painting, he obtained that perfection which one admires in his works.

It is certain that, after Raphael, no one underſtood perſpective better than him, which has ſo much contributed to the deſign of his naked figures, and that no one, except perhaps Michael Angelo, knew like Correggio the ſcience of the forms, and conſtruction of the human figure. Clare obſcure is ſo inſeparable from deſign, that the one cannot perfectly exiſt without the other; becauſe, deſign being deprived of clare obſcure can only repreſent a kind of ſection, parallel with the ſurface upon which one paints, nor will ever arrive to expreſs the true form of things. Correggio knew how to unite theſe two qualities with ſo much perfection, that one ſees them combined in his works the ſame as in nature; and it appears impoſſible that he had been able to attain this ſo egregiouſly without having much ſtudied relief, and ſculpture, becauſe pure truth without the aforeſaid ſtudies would not be ſufficient to teach a thing ſo difficult; and for that reaſon Michael Angelo modelled firſt in earth, or in wax, thoſe figures which he had to paint; as he himſelf refers in a letter to Varchi: nor before him was there a painter who dared to uſe foreſhortenings and contractions and extenſions of the muſcles, and of the forms of the centre to the circumference, as he did.

From whence, if, in modelling, Buonarroti taught this ſtyle, which is naturally his, it will not be ſurpriſing that the knowledge of beautiful contours, and the grand ſtyle of Correggio

ariſe from the ſame origin; that is, from the ſtudy of relief, and modelling his figures: it being known to us that he uſed the *plaſtica*.

Beſides that part of clare obſcure which regards the expreſſion of the forms, Correggio was alſo ſuperior to all other painters in the general clare obſcure; that is, in the general diſpoſal of lights and ſhades, becauſe that ſame gradation which he uſed in one part, or in one figure, he uſed alſo in an entire piece, diſtributing the lights in ſuch a manner that the firſt is only one; and the ſame may be ſaid of the ſecond, and the others. Thus is his ſhade all varied, but ſometimes with force and ſometimes with grandeur, and many times only by the quality of the colours of which they are compoſed. He managed the contraſts with ſoftneſs, nor ever put the greateſt clares in contraposition to the greateſt obſcures, without forming ſomething which would take from their aſperity, or placing them by the ſide of ſome greater ſhade. Beſides that, he conſidered that all bodies are of ſuch a nature, that they do not retain all the rays of light which they receive; and that they ſpread or reflect the major part at all ſides, according to the figure of the ſuperfice; for which reaſon they ought neceſſarily to mix with the light ſhades which are in the maſs of illuminated bodies.

Correggio wonderfully underſtood the aërial perſpective of the clare obſcure and colours, but without the affectation of ſome very modern painters; nor ſolely underſtood the gradations of the lines. But he had beſides obſerved, that if, in nature, ſhades loſe their force in diſtance,

lights loſe it much more; and that little things are the firſt to be confuſed. From whence he inferred, that the contours languiſh and are loſt at a little diſtance, terminating in pure points, the laſt extremes of bodies which one cannot perfectly ſee. With regard to colours, he knew very well thoſe which loſe more or leſs their activity in the intermediate ambient. In ſhort, he perfectly poſſeſſed that art by which painting delights and deceives the ſenſes.

His colouring is moſt beautiful, but appears alſo more ſo from the perfect gradation of the tints, and that pleaſing and diligent manner of impaſting his paintings, which added to his ſimple colours a certain clearneſs to be found in Correggio alone: ſo that, in his works, one cannot determine whether he were moſt excellent or intelligent either in the forms, the colouring, clare obſcure, or in the manner of extending the colours; becauſe whoever conſiders all that, will find that he was equally a maſter in all theſe parts, and that in all he had made the moſt profound reflections. What arduous ſtudy does it not require to poſſeſs an art ſo difficult, and to form a habit of working with ſo much excellence!

It is certain, that he who poſſeſſes in perfection the greateſt number of the parts of painting will be found the moſt excellent; and it is alſo certain, that Raphael and Correggio are for that reaſon the two greateſt painters; and theſe eſpecially arrived to the accompliſhment of expreſſing in one ſole point all the apparent and

pleaſing effects of nature. It is true, that Titian was ſo great a maſter in colouring, that, by his tints, he merited the firſt rank in that part; but he did not poſſeſs that perfect gradation, which expreſſes the moſt delicate and almoſt inſenſible forms; and which contributes much to the imitation of truth, and ſometimes more than colouring itſelf: and by that we ſee that many works of Correggio done in freſco, with a tone of the tint low and pallid, can enchant by tranſporting the ſpectator from the idea of fiction to that of truth; which is the primary end every painter ought to aim at.

Correggio was the firſt who made drapery enter in the invention of compoſition; either in the effect of clare obſcure, colouring, and of harmony, as for the direction and contraſt. He took leſs care of each particular fold, than of the maſs of the drapery; from whence he opened a new way of diſpoſing well the drapery in large works: and in that he was very well imitated by Lanfranco and others.

I have ſaid that Correggio unitedly poſſeſſed thoſe various parts of painting which ſingly have made illuſtrious painters; as truth and grace made Raphael illuſtrious, cheerfulneſs Leonard, impaſting Giorgione, and colouring Titian. I confeſs, however, that in each of theſe things ſeparately, he was leſs excellent than them. He knew, notwithſtanding, how to unite the whole as they are in nature, and to temperate, by his modeſt and ſoft genius, thoſe which are very violent, and to combine them with his

philoſophical underſtanding; ſo that whatever he knew how to expreſs ſeparately, he wiſhed to ſee united; and he ſucceeded in it.

But however great I conſider Correggio, I do not ſtill think him greater than Raphael. It is well known that his paintings are more equal in the execution, and more exquiſite; but with all that he did not poſſeſs in ſo high a degree of excellence as Raphael, the expreſſions of the affections of the mind, which is really that which gives the greateſt nobleneſs to painting, and is equal to the impreſſion which eloquence and poetry make on the minds of men.

Raphael therefore painted with more excellence the effects of the mind, and Correggio the effects of bodies. In viewing a painting of Raphael, one feels more than that which one ſees; and in one of Correggio, the eye ſees more than the mind can comprehend; and the ſenſes remain ſuſpended, and the heart enchanted. Correggio appears finally the painter of Grace.

If Raphael is any thing ſuperior to Correggio, this is much more than all the others who came after him. Until his time, painting always gained: he completed it, and was the meridian of the art: from that point it always went declining, nor do we know how to be able to re-eſtabliſh it; much leſs how to improve it; unleſs there appears ſome great genius who knows how to unite the beauties of the ancients, and thoſe of Raphael, Correggio, and Titian, with the truth of nature.

The knowledge which we have of the great

and intereſting life of Correggio, is confined, confuſed and contradictory. Neither the literati, or painters, who have written the lives of Artiſts, have done him that juſtice which he merited. In the mean time, he was worthy that ſome one ſhould have taken care to inform himſelf well of the circumſtances of a man, to whom the noble art of painting owes ſo much. This negligence is not only an injuſtice to his memory, but a great loſs to community; becauſe there is nothing which ſtimulates geniuſes ſo much as the hiſtories of great men; and often by theſe means the vices of ſelf-love and ambition, change their nature, and are converted into virtue. For this reaſon, it has appeared to me proper to examine, as well as I have been able, this phenomenon of the pictorial hiſtory, to remedy in ſome manner the injuſtice which has forgotten Correggio, by writing with too much prolixity the lives of infinite other painters, from which no inſtruction, utility, or delight, can arrive.

It is very uſeful that men live in the belief that merit is the origin of honour and fortune: by this means they are urged on to follow it. However, it is accidents which generally decide the fate of men; and the ſame virtue in different times and places produces different effects. Anthony Allegri was born in too confined a country, and was inclined by his talent and natural genius to love, and to the deſire of knowledge, and contrary to luxury and vanity: he ought not, therefore, to have expoſed himſelf to the great world; and if he had, his modeſty would have

impeded him from making his fortune where intrigue would have been of more value than merit.

His works evince, that as long as he lived he always endeavoured to render his art more perfect; because in every one is ſeen ſome new improvement. This love of conſtantly ſtudying belongs only to thoſe who are endowed with that happy humility which makes them know how much they are deficient. Having always painted lovelily, and choſen that which was moſt grateful, one might infer that he was of a mild diſpoſition, and of a ſtudious, modeſt, tender, diligent, and philoſophical genius: but all this capital ſeldom leads a man to fortune, if accidents do not drag him there by force. For the ſame reaſons he muſt have been little known to the wealthy and courtezans, and of courſe forgotten by thoſe who praiſe only the artiſts who make much rumour, and acquire them glory and profit. Correggio was ſtudious, and fond of retirement, and living at a little court could not be an object for the hiſtory of ſuch authors. To this I add, that being born after the great men who illuſtrated their age and profeſſion, he ought to be regarded as a youthful painter, and diſciple of thoſe who enjoyed the greateſt reputation, not being known until the age of thirty years, when Titian was ſeventy-ſeven, and Raphael was dead. In ſhort, Correggio was the youngeſt among the great painters who, in the florid time of Italy, have remained ſo famous. The diſtance of more than two ages and an half ſince their death, makes it appear to us as if they had flouriſhed in the ſame time.

The retirement in which I have ſaid Correggio lived, and the negligence of the writers of lives, have been the cauſe why Vaſari was ſo ill informed of Correggio, and of other painters of Lombardy. This cauſe pleaſes me more than envy, which many attribute to him. The truth is, that alſo in the moſt indifferent things reſpecting Correggio, as well as things of conſequence, and in the deſcriptions of his paintings, Vaſari ſpeaks with equivocation, nor ſays the truth, as one might ſee in the relation which he gives of thoſe which Correggio painted for the Duke of Mantua, and on other occaſions.

When Vaſari ſays that Correggio had more merit in execution than in deſign, I believe he would not wiſh to be underſtood that he deſigned ill, but that, from an effect of ſelf-love, he deſigned beſt, and ſtudied that moſt in his paintings. The Tuſcan ſchool acknowledged with difficulty that any other deſigned like them; and for that reaſon I believe that Vaſari would wiſh to ſay that Correggio did not deſign like Michael Angelo, the hero of his country. This is confirmed by what the ſame Vaſari ſays, confeſſing that the deſigns of Correggio are done in a good ſtyle, beautiful, and with the execution of a maſter. The ſame hiſtorian confines himſelf to praiſe almoſt only the excellence with which Correggio painted the hair; and it is very ſtrange that, before ſo many wonderful things, he found only that praiſe-worthy. It is alſo ſingular that Vaſari, and many others, attribute only the pure gift of nature to the excellence of Cor-

reggio in the art. * This is a groſs error; becauſe, although genius can do much, no one who reflects can be perſuaded that that is ſufficient, without great ſtudy, to form a painter ſo ſublime as Correggio *, who, at the age of thirty years, had formed a new ſtyle, and more exquiſite than was ever known before him. Michael Angelo, who had ſo great a genius, did not owe the whole of the art to his natural abilities; nor with theſe alone could he have found the means to exceed the limits of that dry and ſervile ſtyle which till then reigned in Italy; nor without great ſtudy, and the obſervations of the ancient ſtatues, would he have been, perhaps, more than equal to a Donatello, and a Ghilberti. Raphael himſelf has left in his works the traces of his ſtudies; and without the leſſons of Father Bartholemy, and the ſight of the works of Michael Angelo, and thoſe of the ancients, we ſhould not at this time have enjoyed his wonderful paintings. I conclude, therefore, that Correggio ſtudied the works and the maxims of the ancients, and of the beſt maſters, to arrive to be that prodigy of a painter which he was.

I have expreſſed as well as I am able, the motives by which we have not a faithful and circumſtantial hiſtory of the life of Correggio. I have ſaid that which I know, adding the conjectures which appear to me moſt probable. I have deſcribed his works with the greateſt exact-

* Natura fieret laudabile carmen an arte
Quæſitum eſt. Ego nec ſtudium ſine divite vena,
Nec rude quid poſſit video ingenium: alterius ſic
Altera poſcit opem res, et conjurat amice.

neſs this ſhort account would permit; and I have examined the degree of merit of this great man in all the parts of painting. Nothing remains now to ſay, only that Correggio is the modern Apelles, becauſe in compariſon with him he has poſſeſſed the higheſt grace in the art, and with his ſingular works he has taught the perfection which we have to ſearch in the execution of painting, to the end that we might finally arrive to know when we may with propriety call a work complete.

ANNOTATIONS

UPON THE

ANTECEDENT MEMOIRS.

MENGS, as has been ſaid, compoſed theſe memoirs to ſupply the defects in the life of Correggio as written by Vaſari; and as there are many who, from the credit of this author, and of his Annotators, will think that theſe may be calumnies to diſcredit them, I conceive theſe notes neceſſary, in order that the reader may be able to judge on which ſide the truth is.

What Vaſari ſays of Correggio in general, is evident confuſion and contradiction. He makes Correggio to have a timid ſoul, and ſo much a friend to parſimony, that in conſequence of his avarice he became more miſerable than it is poſſible to expreſs.

The works of Correggio, and the expences that attended them, contradict this ſuppoſed avarice; nay, even prove that he was of a moſt liberal turn of ſentiment; and laſtly, that he was not poor, ſince his labours did not render him ſo mean a recompenſe as they would generally wiſh us to underſtand.

As to the arts, Vaſari ſays, that Correggio was in the art very much inclined to melancholy.

I cannot conceive it poſſible for a man to perſuade himſelf that the invention of a painter is melancholic, who, according to the judgment of all the world, compoſed moſt cheerfully; and by which he merited from the public the title of Painter of the Graces; nor is it conſiſtent even with the ſame Vaſari, who ſays, It is held as certain, that no one diſpoſed his colours better than him, nor with greater delicacy. No artiſt painted with more relief; ſuch was the ſoftneſs of the fleſh which he executed, and the grace with which he finiſhed his works. In deſcribing the picture at Parma he ſubjoins—"Near this place is a child who laughs ſo naturally that it moves to laughter whoſoever views it; nor is there any one ſo melancholy, who, on viewing it, does not immediately become cheerful. Are theſe cheerfulneſſes, theſe gaieties of colouring, from a painter ſo melancholic in his art?"

Vaſari in continuation ſays, "If Correggio had left Lombardy and had viſited Rome, he would have performed miracles; becauſe his performances being ſuch, without having viewed the remains of antiquity, or the good works of the moderns, it neceſſarily follows, that if he had ſeen them, he would have infinitely improved his own works, and, by proceeding from good to better, would have arrived at the higheſt perfection."

Setting apart the point already cleared up by Mengs, "if Correggio had been at Rome;" and

even although he had not been there, it is evident that he knew and profited himſelf of the antique. I ſhould be glad to know what miracles he would have done, and what things (as Vaſari thinks) could have been added to the pictures of Correggio; and what conception he had of the works of that artiſt who aſſerts, that one could have infinitely improved them. For me, I ſhould hold a man the moſt extraordinary who could be capable of telling me, and much more of perſuading me, of the defects of that painter. And if he ſhould add the knowledge of painting better than him, I ſhould eſteem him the greateſt artiſt upon earth. It is not leſs extraordinary, that one who painted like Vaſari, found it ſo eaſy, infinitely to amend the works of Correggio. Upon the queſtion ſo diſputed, if Correggio was at Rome, and if he improved himſelf from the pictures of Melozzo of Forli, which were in the ancient church of the Holy Apoſtles, I ſay that various pictures cut from that tribune now exiſt in the Vatican, in the apartment where Benedict XIII. lived; and which now is the habitation of the Cardinal Zelada, Librarian; where the curious will be able to confront them with thoſe of Correggio.

The manner of the deſign of Correggio did not pleaſe Vaſari, ſince in a marginal note he remarks, that he excelled more in colouring than in deſign; and immediately in the text he excuſes him, on account of the difficulty of poſſeſſing all the parts of an art ſo extenſive as that of painting; becauſe many have deſigned well, and coloured badly, and ſo on the contrary.

This ſpecies of criticiſm means not otherwiſe than that Correggio did not deſign in the manner that Vaſari did, and that he ſelected different forms from either Vaſari or his ſchool. The one held as good all contortions, and deſigned every thing with force and energy, arrogantly diſplaying his ſkill in anatomy, whilſt the other was all ſoftneſs, ſweetneſs, and grace; but in his manner, Correggio was as able a deſigner as the moſt able Tuſcan: and the ſame Vaſari confeſſes that his deſigns are of a good taſte, that they have grace, and the touch of a maſter.

The annotator of Vaſari goes much further than him, aſſuring us that if the Caraccis had repainted the Tribune of St. John at Parma, which they had already copied from the original, that although they had remained inferior to Correggio in the colouring, they would have equalled, if not ſurpaſſed him in deſign. The Caraccis, who were of ſome conſequence in the world by having ſtudied or imitated Correggio, were ſufficiently modeſt not to aſpire to ſuch an eulogium, and too able in their profeſſion not to know the merit of their maſter. Vaſari, after having exhibited to us the puſillanimity of Correggio, the obſcurity in which he is ſuppoſed to have lived, and that his miſery could not be exceeded, informs us, that the Duke of Mantua choſe him to paint two pictures worthy the acceptance of Charles the Fifth, to whom he wiſhed to preſent them; and that Giulio Romano, who was then in the ſervice of the abovementioned Duke, and not preferred to Correggio, declared to have

never in his life ſeen ſuch colouring. Giulio Romano ſpoke at leaſt of what he had ſeen; but it was not poſſible that Vaſari could have ſeen them, nor could have been well informed of what he writes, becauſe his relation accords in nothing with the truth. The Danae he calls Venus, and ſays that in that picture the landſcape was the moſt beautiful that any Lombard had ever painted, when there is not a ſhadow of a landſcape in that picture; and ſubjoins, That which gave the more grace to the Venus, was a clear and limpid ſtream which ran amongſt ſome rocks bathing her feet. This might in part apply to the Leda, as one may ſee by the deſcription which Mengs gives of it, and in the print taken from this picture: but in the Danae, which Vaſari calls Venus, one finds nothing at all of this; and he who will may ſee it in two copies of this picture ſufficiently exact, which are in Rome, one in the houſe of the Prince Santa Croce, and the other at that of the Marcheſe Orſini de Cavalieri.

Vaſari aſcribes to Correggio the painting of the Tribune of the *Duomo* at Parma, when that *Duomo* never had a Tribune painted by Correggio; it was certainly in the church of St. John: by the ſame miſtake Vaſari places in the above-mentioned *Duomo*, two pictures in oil by Correggio, which have always been in St. John's; but this error has already been remarked by Bottari. Twice Vaſari ſpeaks of the admirable art with which Correggio painted hair. The thing is true; but it appears ridiculous that Correggio

having ſo much merit in the other more noble parts, he ſhould affectedly praiſe this trifling ability.

After the confuſion and diſorder with which Vaſari writes the life of Correggio, and after having accuſed him as a melancholic and puſillanimous painter, and an indifferent deſigner, and ignorant of his own proper merit, &c. &c. he finiſhes by giving him a thouſand encomiums; ſaying, that amongſt thoſe of the profeſſion one admires as divine every thing of his. Vaſari aſſerts his not being able to find the portrait of Correggio, and his annotator Bottari pretends to give it to us diſcovered in a print of Belluzzi, but ſays not from whence he copied it. Every one who ſees this portrait, which repreſents a bald old man, and decrepit, ſees at once that it cannot be the portrait of a man who died at forty years of age.

There was found at Genoa a few years ago, a ſmall picture on wood, eight inches long, the portrait of a man, rather handſome and of a fair complexion, having this inſcription: *Doſſo Doſſi dipinſe queſto ritratto di Antonio da Correggio.* Mengs got a deſign made from it, but I know not what is become of it. I being in Turin ſeven years ago, ſaw in the *Vigna* of the Queen, a ſeries of portraits, amongſt which was one of a middle-aged man with a beard, and light coloured hair, on which was written: *Antonio Allegri da Correggio.* Many have taxed Vaſari of partiality, and many others of envy, in his hiſtory of the lives of the painters, through

negligence, through infidelity, and through the inaccuracy with which he wrote the lives of thoſe who were not Tuſcans, praiſing above the clouds many of them who merited not even to be mentioned. I cannot believe Vaſari ſo malignant, ſince all his writings indicate a goodneſs of heart, and an honeſt man; from whence I think that he praiſed from ſincerity him whom he thought praiſe-worthy according to the beſt of his judgment. Therefore, that which he did not underſtand it was not poſſible for him to praiſe; and if he had known in what conſiſted the grace of the works of Correggio, and the true merit of thoſe of Raphael, he would certainly have praiſed them, confining himſelf to thoſe parts, and would not ſo whimſically have taken the ſubject of praiſing them for their manner of painting hair.

One ſees Vaſari was perſuaded, that beyond the ſchool and manner of Michael Angelo, little good was to be expected from the fine arts. He collected all the little ſtories which vulgarly were prevalent amongſt the profeſſors. He underſtood the arts as a mechanic: he had no better ſkill; and willing to write a voluminous work, he compiled lives in the beſt manner he could, and in a ſtyle inſipid and vulgar, which he uſually ſpoke with his bricklayers and carpenters. Monſignor Bottari, his defender and panegyriſt, excuſes him in another manner, by ſaying, "it is not poſſible that Vaſari would tell a lie in a thing in which he could be convinced with ſo much eaſe." A feeble reaſon indeed! If Vaſari had

even thought ſo, he would not have written falſehoods upon that which he had a thouſand times ſeen with his own eyes, as he does ſpeaking of the pictures of Raphael in the Vatican *.

* The life of Correggio compoſed by Mengs, as I have publiſhed it, has been printed at Finale in 1781, by a certain Carlo Giuſeppe Ratti, who pretending not to know the works of Mengs, gives himſelf as the author of this life; and to give a better appearance to it, he inſerts in this publication a letter which he ſays was written to him by Mengs in 1774, from Madrid, in which he makes that gentleman ſay, that he wiſhes him to collect, and publiſh ſpeedily, the anecdotes of the life and works of Correggio. Therefore he has publiſhed this life, as if it had never been either written or printed by Mengs, although it is truly the very ſame of Mengs. Ratti has however arranged it in his own manner, by changing words and phraſes wherever he treats of the arts, and has believed he has produced a maſter-piece by embroidering it with very precious erudition, as for example: *Correggio is a city equal to every illuſtrious city in Lombardy, and has produced great men of every denomination even unto Cardinals*; and therefore he, Ratti, produces epitaphs, teſtimonials, titles, employments, tombs, dates, chronologies, and many other anecdotes, all very uſeful to painting and painters. He recounts at laſt all the ſcholars of Correggio, and he recounts not a few of them, but makes them all clever, very clever fellows; and then he paſſes to his diſciples, amongſt whom he makes Lanfranco his arch-diſciple, and more than arch-diſciple Ferrari, probably becauſe he was a Genoeſe; and terminates finally with Mengs, whom he pretends to be the faithful imitator of Correggio, without ſpecifying in what he followed him.

Since then this Ratti is wilful in publiſhing, it is neceſſary to publiſh him ſuch as he really is. He is a lame Genoeſe with mouth awry, and with the trifling talents of imitating the motions and abſurdities of people. With this deſirable ſtock he flattered the taſte of Mengs, who, notwithſtanding the ſerioufneſs of his character, was pleaſed to divert himſelf with cheerful and facetious people, even in a ſtyle low and burleſque. For that reaſon, in his hours of repoſe he diverted himſelf frequently with Ratti; and he became ſo attached to him that he fixed him in his houſe, providing him with every thing; and to be of ſome ſervice to him he was willing to make a painter of him, deſigning for him various ſketches in clare obſcure, for a picture of the Nativity of Chriſt, which he was engaged to do for the church of the merchants of Barcelona. This painter, who was no painter, ſelected the moſt beautiful of theſe ſketches about ſix palms in height (it is a capital work that

I poſſeſs). In this manner he made his picture, without any other fatigue than to ſquare and colour it; and by ſo doing he did himſelf immortal honour.

This man would have continued to live in the houſe of Mengs, if, blinded by the favour of his patron, the whim had not come into his head to aſpire to the hand of his daughter. Hardly was this ridiculous pretenſion of his diſcovered, than he was turned out with the approbation of the whole family, and eſpecially with that of the wife of Mengs, who was not pleaſed with the ill-bred manners of this fellow.

This man, nevertheleſs, has always preſerved ſo great a gratitude for Mengs, that, as ſoon as he was dead, he diſembogued his life, in which Mengs would not have known himſelf had he had the opportunity of reading it. He has always called himſelf his friend and diſciple; and laſtly, he has reprinted Mengs's Life of Correggio, giving it as his own proper work. This is the conduct of Carlo Giuſeppe Ratti!

To know better the character of this man, behold one of his letters written to Mengs, and choſen among many, becauſe here he ſpeaks of the above praiſed ſketch of the precept.—We ſhall give it in the original, not being poſſible or neceſſary to tranſlate it.

Roma, 27 Febbraro 1773.

" Oggi dopo pranzo [illegible] aver portata una lettera e raccoman-
" datala caldamente all[illegible]a di Napoli, non potendo io quietare
" per non aver V. S. riceviti li noti bozzetti, ſono andato dal
" Signor Agente, il quale ſta male per eſſer egli ſtato aſſalito da
" una fiera colica, che dette molto da temere; e da lui ho ſaputo
" che ſubito conſegnò al Corriere per mezzo del Maſtro di poſta
" l'involto; onde ſon andato ad eſſo Maſtro di poſta, e mi ha detto
" averlo egli ſteſſo premuroſamente conſegnato; che perciò ne
" ſi fa ricerca in Segreteria di Stato e dal Signor Tanucci,
" perchè non ſi puol eſſere ſmarrito in verun modo. Dio mio! Se
" io ſupponeva queſto, mi abbozzava il mio Quadro da quel boz-
" zetto a chiaroſcuro, quello come io ſcriſſi allora, che avea il S.
" Giuſeppe di ſchiena in avanti, ed il paſtore colla pecora, perchè
" quanto più me lo ricordo, mi par coſa divina.

" A' Liberti ſeguita la ſolita burletta con Muſica d'Anfoſſi,
" perchè Roma tuttodì vi accorre come ſe foſſe la prima ſera: ed
" è coſa particolare a vedere la forza della Muſica con quattro o
" ſei ſcannati muſicacci che cantano, e non vagliono un bajocco, e
" pure compariſcono valentuomini. A Valle li ſecondi intermezzi
" mi dicono che hanno in contrato terribilmente, e ſono Muſica
" d'un Marcellino da Capua, che ha compoſto per la ſeconda
" commedia che dovea andare in ſcena ai Liberti; ma che met-
" teranno fuori al più tardi perchè ſono troppo al ſicuro della
" prima. In Argentina la Muſica è di Anfoſſi pure, e piace molto
" due arie ed un duetto di Tenducci. Quelle di Mazzante piac-

" ciono tutte, ma perchè quelle le canta di ſuo, perchè come è il
" primo Maeſtro di Cappella del Mondo, così non vuole la ſua
" modeſtia che ſi ſoggetti ad alcuno. Nella prima opera che
" anderà per terra affatto, ne fu fatta una curioſa, e fu, che venne
" mandato un facchino a Compoſtof con un paolo ed un biglietto,
" dove veniva ſupplicato il ſignor Impreſſario a conſegnare al latore
" un paolo di bolletrini, e metterglieli in una ſporta che a tale effetto
" gli mandavano. Mi conſervi la ſua grazia."

A DISCOURSE

UPON THE

ACADEMY OF THE FINE ARTS AT MADRID.

BY an *academy* is underſtood an aſſembly of men the moſt expert in ſcience or in art, their object being to inveſtigate truth, and to find fixed rules always conducing to progreſs and perfection. It is very different from a ſchool in which able maſters teach the elements of ſciences or of arts. The fine arts, as liberal ones, have their fixed rules founded in reaſon and on experience, by which means they join to obtain their end, which is the perfect imitation of nature; from whence an academy of theſe arts ought not to comprehend alone the execution, but ought to apply principally to the theory and to the ſpeculation of rules, ſince indeed theſe arts terminate in the operation of the hand; but if this is not directed by good theory, they will be deprived of the title of liberal arts.

Some erroneouſly think that practice alone is of more importance than all the rules together, and without them there have been great artiſts. Falſe are ſuch ideas, and ſo falſe that they merit not a confutation. Whatever is done without reaſon and

without rules is all hazard. How is it poſſible to arrive to a determinate end without a ſure guide to conduct us? Painting and ſculpture are arts ſimilar to poetry; and as in this laſt art, ſenſibility, imagination and genius, can never produce, without rules and knowledge, any thing but dreams and monſtrous productions, the ſame muſt happen in the two firſt. Therefore, as the poet, without knowing profoundly the ſubject which he has to treat and the language in which he is to explain himſelf, can never produce a perfect work, neither will the painter or ſculptor know how to perform a work worthy theſe profeſſions, if they know not the forms of the bodies which they imitate, and the diverſity of manners with which they preſent them to our ſight; and the ſame will happen if they know not the theory of the art.

I do not, however, ſay that theory alone ought to exclude the exerciſe of the hand; on the contrary, I infinitely recommend it: both ought always to be united; and in this ſenſe ought to be underſtood the oracle of Michael Angelo, who was wont to ſay that all the art conſiſted in the *obedience of the hand to the conception.* This great man well underſtood that images ought to be well imprinted on the mind, and the idea of every thing which the hand ought to execute. From whence it is neceſſary always to have practice, but with the knowledge of why and wherefore.

The able profeſſors of an academy ought to endeavour, by conferring together, to find out certain rules, by which ſtudents may be able

to abbreviate the courſe of arts ſo extenſive. Theſe rules will be preſcribed to youth as fundamental laws, explaining to them reaſons by clear demonſtrations, which not only may convince, but perſuade, ſince without perſuaſion one is not capable of doing any thing perfect.

All academies of arts have begun from being ſchools, and afterwards have been transformed into what we call academies, that is to ſay, ſocieties of profeſſors, who by their conferences and diſcourſes promote inſtructions, and have merited the protection of princes. In this manner have begun the academies of Rome, Bologna, Florence and Paris, &c. &c.

The utility of ſuch eſtabliſhments conſiſts in the advancement of arts, and in the influence which they occaſion in a nation by diſſeminating there a good taſte: ſince it is the intelligence of deſign which directs all arts treating of figures or of forms. This utility cannot poſſibly be obtained by any academy, if good reaſoning and the aforeſaid theory of deſign are not publicly taught; becauſe, without theory, deſign is only a practical and material action which produces the figure alone that one circumſcribes, without giving to it a general intelligence, or inſtructing how to judge of the forms. For which reaſon, every academy which follows not the abovementioned maxims, will have material deſigners and artiſans, but not illuminated and excellent artiſts; and in conſequence will operate againſt its principal end, and will waſte the time that it employs in bad inſtructions.

Applying now the diſcourſe to the academy of St. Ferdinand, let us ſee what reaſon finds there good or bad eſtabliſhed for the profit of the nation. The aforeſaid academy began by deſign and modelling, as all others, and the generoſity of the founder endowed it perhaps more amply than any other academy in Europe. Many believe that the fruit which it has produced abundantly correſponds to its inſtitution; but as good as a thing may be, it is always ſuſceptible of improvement, therefore it appears to me that ſomething could be rectified.

This academy is governed by thoſe who ought to protect it, that is to ſay, by counſellors, who by their high birth, employments, and circumſtances, have not had an opportunity of inſtructing themſelves fundamentally either in works or concerning artiſts. They are thoſe who vote and accept or refuſe perſons who aſpire to the honour of being admitted into the academy. Hence, favours do not depend on thoſe who are capable to judge of merit. It is, however, true that theſe gentlemen, before they decide, hear the profeſſors in all things reſpecting art; but if they are obliged to regulate themſelves according to theſe councils, their deciſion is uſeleſs; for what uſe can it be to have the propoſitions of thoſe who cannot decide, and let thoſe decide who cannot propoſe? In all other academies of the world, there are profeſſors who vote and decide abſolutely in what reſpects the government of them, and as to the merit of individuals and their works; and the princes and nobles reſerve no other privilege to themſelves than that of protecting and honour-

ing the art and artiſts. This protection ought to be effective, and not a mere appearance, by diſtinguiſhing the profeſſors according to their merit, and not confounding them with artiſans, and employing them in works of importance; becauſe, if the nobles and rich men of a kingdom have not an inclination to encourage works, and ſo to diffuſe the taſte of arts throughout a nation, they will periſh for want of ſupport; becauſe, if the king alone employs artiſts, he cannot employ more than a limited number, and the taſte of the arts concentres itſelf in his perſon alone, cauſing barbariſm in all the remaining part of the kingdom; as in another place has been ſaid to have happened from the reign of Philip II. unto that of our ſovereign, notwithſtanding they loved and protected the arts, and chiefly that of painting, and nevertheleſs good taſte has never diffuſed itſelf generally through the nation. Theſe circumſtances being ſuppoſed, the academy of Madrid is to be conſidered either as an academy or a ſchool, or both together. Whichever of theſe things it may be, it is always required that the members who compoſe it be maſters the moſt expert in the arts, ſince the academicians ought to be capable of explaining the definitions of the art from whence the rules are deduced, becauſe, to act like a maſter, it is neceſſary to know well the profeſſion. Academic diſcourſes diſcover the difficulties of the art to youth who are willing to profeſs it, and place the *dilettantis* in a ſituation to underſtand, and to be capable of ſoundly judging of works. This circumſtance

is ſometimes more neceſſary in Spain than in other places, becauſe the generality of the nation have not a juſt idea of arts, and of their dignity, or of many gifts from heaven, or of ſtudy, which ought to concur to make a great artiſt. The abovementioned diſcourſes, and academic conferences, will alſo ſerve to profeſſors themſelves, becauſe not all know ſcientifically the principles of their profeſſion, and will be by theſe means ſtimulated to ſtudy them. Finally, in conſequence of examining matter, one ſhall deſtroy by little and little the falſe maxims that may have intruded themſelves in the rules of the arts. Youth will have another advantage in hearing the great difficulties that attend the arts in the difficult ſtudy that they purſue; for then would generous ſouls alone undertake them, and thoſe who diſcover leſs force and leſs talents would abandon the undertaking, or would be content to apply themſelves to a part proportioned to their capacity. In this manner every talent would remain at liberty, nor would be conſtrained to the uniformity of ſtudy; and that which imports more, it would acquire art, but not the particular ſtyle of any maſter.

The greateſt utility which, as I think, would ariſe from ſuch ſtudies, would be that the nobility and wealthy would inſtruct themſelves in the principles of the arts, and would conceive for them a proper love and eſteem; as in many of them there is a natural diſpoſition, and nothing is wanted but to have heard profeſſors who could make them perceive the importance, dignity and

ſplendour of the arts. Hiſtory offers to us the neceſſity of this eſteem, ſince wherever it is wanting, the arts and ſciences are infallibly wanting alſo. The Egyptians, who invented almoſt all the arts, never perfected any one, becauſe they did not honour their profeſſors, not conſidering them otherwiſe than as artiſans. The Phœnicians advanced them a little more, becauſe they gave as an object to the arts the utility of commerce. Greece, and particularly in learned Athens, where there was a greater equality of perſons in the ſtate, and where the arts and ſciences were eſteemed little leſs than divine, and where ingenuity led to the higheſt ſituation of citizenſhip, it was there where painting, ſculpture, and architecture flouriſhed moſt worthily. The Romans never equalled the Grecians in theſe profeſſions, becauſe their road to honour was in the military ſervice, and they availed themſelves of the artiſts of conquered Greece, reduced to a ſevere ſervitude. Whence they debaſed the artiſts and their works. I therefore conclude that, to the end that the arts may flouriſh in a nation, it is not only neceſſary that their works may be eſteemed, but that the artiſts may be proportionately honoured, ſince otherwiſe no generous ſoul will ſacrifice his labours and his life in a profeſſion which, inſtead of bringing him honour, diſcredits him; for which reaſon the pūſillanimous alone will apply themſelves to arts, who aſpire to nothing but intereſt, and are incapable of the ſublime conceptions that the arts require, becauſe the work itſelf is always the por-

trait of the ſoul of the artiſt. Every nation would acquire great advantages if its firſt nobles and moſt powerful people attached themſelves to the arts, as we ſee to have happened in all ages when they have flouriſhed; and ſome of them cultivated them ſufficiently to be enabled to underſtand them, as we have various examples, and eſpecially that of the Emperor Adrian. Then they aſſuredly elevate themſelves to the utmoſt perfection, becauſe knowing their merits they cheriſh them, and employ artiſts by putting them in a ſituation to diſplay their talents; for it is no leſs advantageous to profeſſors to be employed, than to learn, the one remaining uſeleſs without the other.

Conſidering now the academy of Madrid as a ſchool, it is neceſſary to make ſome reflections. Even to theſe latter times good examples of the arts were here wanting. In this, however, they have at laſt been ſupplied, the academy being now poſſeſſed of the beſt and moſt copious collection of caſts of the antique ſtatues that are in Europe. From this one now is in a capacity to learn proportions, the art of expreſſing anatomy without harſhneſs, a ſelection of fine forms, and the true character of beauty. Yet according to my belief much time is wanted to acquire an uniform ſyſtem of deſign, and ſome neceſſary parts of art which they either do not teach, or teach improperly. Upon theſe matters I will ſpeak my opinion ingenuouſly.

Although there are found in Madrid many profeſſors of merit, one cannot deny but there have

been, and that there are now elſewhere, ſchools more reputable. One ought not, therefore, to give as an example to youth the particular works of the artiſts of this academy, but one ought to take the beſt works of every ſchool, and of all the moſt celebrated profeſſors. In this manner boys, from their moſt tender age, will accuſtom themſelves to a good ſtyle. Another very great advantage will reſult from it, which is, that the maſters of the academy will be able to ſpeak with freedom, not being led away by ſelf love or by human prejudices, which prevent a man from ſpeaking frankly his ſentiments, there where he ſpeaks of his own work, or of his aſſociates, having themſelves many reaſons to palliate their own opinions.

It would be alſo very convenient that profeſſors ſhould give a good example in deſigning and of modelling together with their ſcholars in the modelling room, by this means animating the youth and the profeſſors themſelves in the inferior claſſes: this ſtudy being much more uſeful to the advanced than to ſcholars. Above all it would be neceſſary that one ſhould examine with the greateſt attention every thing propoſed to youth; not ſubmitting to the caprice of particulars the introductions of vicious examples, ſince it is much more difficult to undo a vice acquired in early years, than to learn a thouſand good things.

The time that is deſtined in the academy for ſtudy is neither ſufficient or proper, becauſe the hours of the night are few for a ſtudy ſo ex-

tenſive; and the ſpirits of a youth, diſtracted by the occupations of the day, have not the neceſſary activity for learning, and for fixing in the memory the things that are taught him. It would be therefore neceſſary, ſince the academy is to be alſo a ſchool, to do that which is practiſed in the ſchools of other branches, that is to ſay, to employ in ſtudy the later hours of the day, with the aſſiſtance of profeſſors of an inferior rank, and thoſe ſhould give an account to the ſuperior of the progreſs and of the mode of teaching. This exerciſe would be, beſides that, very uſeful to themſelves; and the principal maſters ought to review the ſtudies of youth, in order to change the claſſes according to their progreſs.

The exerciſe of night ought to ſerve only for thoſe who, being already advanced in the theory of the art, have occaſion to augment the practice by frequent uſe, becauſe otherwiſe, with the ſolicitude with which they ought to work at night, pupils accuſtom themſelves to an incorrectneſs which degenerates into a vicious negligence, there not being time to obſerve well the rules and the reaſons of art; and thoſe who begin to copy rudiments have not ſufficient time to ſee the fruit of their application, whence many diſcourage themſelves and abandon the ſtudy already begun. In ſhort, if the academy is to be a ſchool, it is neceſſary to practiſe there all that which a vigilant and good maſter ought privately to do for his own diſciples; otherwiſe it will never become an uſeful ſchool.

If laws, and the maxims of public lectures, are

not fixed in a manner that youth learn as if they ſtudied under one maſter only, they will confuſe the diſciple by following different, and ſometimes contradictory rules.

For that reaſon it would be neceſſary, that profeſſors congregate themſelves and well examine matters: they ſhould conſult and determine the method which ought to be followed, weighing well reaſons, pro and contra, reſerving nevertheleſs to amend them, whenever experience and reaſon may indicate the neceſſity.

The things which ought to be taught with a greater diligence are, linear and aërial perſpective, ſelecting notwithſtanding a ſhort method. Then comes anatomy, not as phyſicians and ſurgeons learn it, but as it is ſuitable to the arts, which have for their object the imitation of the exterior forms of things: and as amongſt all the bodies of nature there is not for man any thing more noble, and more worthy than the human figure, it is very neceſſary for him to know it exactly, both in the whole and in its parts, and this is taught us by anatomy. Whence it is that perſpective ſhews to us the manner of imitating the appearance of forms, which one cannot execute without knowing it anatomically. For this reaſon, this ſcience is equally neceſſary to the ſculptor and the painter.

Nor is leſs precious the ſtudy of ſymmetry, that is to ſay, of the proportions of the human body, without which it is not poſſible to know how to ſelect from nature the moſt perfect bodies. By this the ancient Greeks diſtinguiſhed

themſelves ſo ſuperiorly from us; and they derived beauty, grace and animation from the knowledge of proportions.

The art of light and ſhade, which is called clare obſcure, ought to be taught with the ſame accuracy, ſince without it painting cannot have any relief; therefore it is neceſſary to conſider it as an eſſential part, ſo much the more as painters have not always the opportunity of ſeeing things according to nature; and when even they have, it is not ſo eaſy to underſtand the reaſons of them, and to keep faſt to truth by not permitting themſelves to be tranſported by any practical rules followed by ignorant people, and learned without reflection from their maſters. Finally, clare obſcure is a part doubly uſeful, becauſe it pleaſes the intelligent as well as thoſe who are not ſo.

I know not if leſſons of colouring have ever been given, notwithſtanding it is a part ſo principal in painting, that it has its rules founded on ſcience and reaſon. Without ſuch ſtudy, it is impoſſible that youth can acquire a good taſte in colouring, or underſtand harmony.

In the ſame manner it is neceſſary to teach invention and compoſition without omitting the art of compoſing drapery. All theſe have equally their fixed rules; rules neceſſary to be learned, to underſtand what one ſees in nature. I will not ſay that with theſe rules alone, and without talents, it is poſſible to acquire the arts: I ſay, however, that without them, no one will ever arrive to be an excellent artiſt; and if even all

the rules are not ſuſceptible of demonſtration, thoſe indeed which reſpect imitation they abſolutely admit, and thoſe of election have their reaſons almoſt evident.

Some poſſibly will ſay, that all this ſtudy that I propoſe for an academy, could be done by ſome maſter profeſſor in his own houſe to his diſciples. To me it appears otherwiſe, believing it impoſſible that any one man can know equally well ſo many things; and if indeed he knew them, I know not if he would have time or convenience to teach them. Beſides which it might happen, that amongſt thoſe who ſtudy under a particular maſter one would find ſome of talents, which by defect of good inſtruction, or from ſome other motive, cannot arrive to make him a man of great merit; whilſt in a public ſchool he will have occaſion to develop his own ingenuity, and to diſtinguiſh himſelf by emulation, and from a poor unhappy man render himſelf an artiſt, who may give honour to the art, and glory to his country.

Although architecture may be a part conſtituent of an academy equally with that of painting and ſculpture, I have not ſpoken of it, not being willing to go out of my profeſſion; but I believe that without entering into the foundation of it, one may ſay, that ſince the academy will be a ſchool of the fine arts, architecture ought alſo to be taught there, ſince one conceives not what a ſchool is without lectures.

Although architecture has not in nature any prototype ſufficiently known to recur to, like

painting and ſculpture, it has nevertheleſs certain rules of convenience which form its taſte, and theſe may be good or bad as in the other fine arts. That which is to be propoſed to youth is perfection; that is, that which ages and reaſon have authoriſed as the beſt, viz. the primitive Greeks. Whoever ſtudies and knows by memory the dimenſions and proportions of Vignola, or ſome ſuch ſimilar author, will not for that reaſon only have a taſte for good or bad architecture; as he who knows the mechanic meaſure of verſes will not be more a poet on that account. The Vignolas are to Vitruvius, what the Gradus ad Parnaſſum is to the Poetic of Horace. Examples by being ſuch ought not to be propoſed, if the author from whom they come merits it not; and this is exactly that which the profeſſors of an academy ought to examine.

They ought eſpecially to make a great diſtinction between architecture and the art of building, a circumſtance which even in the frontiſpiece of books is wont to be confounded. Invention and taſte make an architect; mathematics and phyſics are his ſervants and miniſters: the firſt is as the head of a man, and the ſecond as his hands. Invention requires great talents, well cultivated, and the art of building is all mechanical and material. At thoſe, who by this laſt road pretend to be architects, and great men, Martial laughs, when he adviſes a father to make his ſtupid ſon an architect:

Si dulci puer ingenio videtur,
Pæconem facias vel architectum.

PRACTICAL LESSONS,

ON

PAINTING.

INTRODUCTION.

RULES FOR MASTERS, IN ORDER TO TEACH WELL THE ART OF PAINTING, AND FOR PUPILS TO LEARN IT AS THEY OUGHT.

SINCE painting is a liberal art, it muſt neceſſarily have a method; and if it has a method, it muſt conſequently have ſure and certain rules. I therefore think it will be uſeful for me to ſet forth here, what reflections every young man ought to make before he begins this profeſſion, and the path he ought to follow after he has undertaken it, that he may always advance the more in his career; and at the ſame time, I ſhall ſay how the maſter ought to conduct himſelf in order to teach his art. Therefore, according to my cuſtom, I give up all pretenſions to eloquence, and ſhall endeavour to explain myſelf as ſimply as poſſible, in order to be underſtood by all claſſes of people.

The firſt quality a boy ought to have who is deſtined by his ſuperiors to follow painting (I ſay ſuperiors, becauſe this profeſſion muſt be commenced before we have a will of our own), is penetration, attention, and patience; and we muſt not ſuffer ourſelves to be dazzled by that vivacity, nor by that fire which is commonly taken for genius, but is not it in reality: on the

contrary, that vivacity often prevents children from reflecting upon things, and conſequently from making improvements in painting. We muſt therefore mind not to be deceived in taking for a genius for painting that inclination to be painters, which is ſeen in many children. The fortunes made by ſome painters induce many parents to bring their children up to this profeſſion, who, after having ſtudied it for a long time, quit it with the ſame levity with which they undertook it.

In order to ſhun theſe inconveniencies, a maſter who is both ſkilful and honeſt, ſhould, before he takes a boy, examine well him and his parents. In the boy he ought to expect only penetration, patience, a love for work, and particularly an exact ſight. The father ought to be perfectly diſintereſted, and have a ſtrong inclination to afford his ſon every neceſſary help; and he muſt not do as many who call themſelves friends, in having paid for a youth a maſter for a ſhort time.

If the boy is found to be poſſeſſed of all the requiſite qualifications, the maſter muſt on his ſide begin by diveſting himſelf as much as he can of his ſelf-love, and teach him all he knows, all he has learnt, and what has not been taught him by any one, and above all he muſt never be apprehenſive of teaching too much; and if unfortunately he ſhould be infected with this foible, I would adviſe him never to be a maſter, for it would not be acting as an honeſt man, wilfully to bring up people to be wretched;

nor do I see a greater misfortune for a man than to have wasted his youth to become a bad painter: and as that depends on the master, he can easily avoid this evil, since no one has a precise obligation to instruct pupils.

It is true, that the world is full of ingratitude, and that a skilful painter in giving his pupil a good education runs the risk of bringing up a viper in his own bosom: but other men's vices are not an excuse for ours; nor can that painter ever exculpate himself, who in bringing up a youth is the cause of his repenting all his life having undertaken this profession. Those professors who by powerful recommendation and without interest see themselves compelled to receive pupils, if they do not teach them with requisite care and application, are, nevertheless excusable; for it is certain that it costs more time and more trouble to finish a good pupil, than the largest picture in the world. Therefore it seems to me very unjust for patrons to pretend, that an artist should lose his time in teaching the art to those who bring him no profit or interest in doing it. This unreasonable practice generally prevails in Italy, which by degrees ruins painting, and the youths who are brought up to it, in spite of the fine geniuses which are to be found. But I shall quit this subject, which draws me from my object, and proceed to the rules and reasons of the art, which I proposed to myself to explain, and therefore shall employ a kind of dialogue, by questions and answers.

Q. How can one know if a child has the neceſſary diſpoſitions for painting?

A. If he has more ſenſe than vivacity, one may conceive good hopes.

Q. What age ſhould the beginner be of?

A. The more tender, the more proper to begin, for from four years he may learn ſomething; and then it will be eaſier for him to acquire a preciſion of ſight, as his organs will not have contracted any particular habit.

Q. And if he began later, could he ever be a good painter?

A. Undoubtedly; but it would coſt him much more trouble: for he muſt neceſſarily have employed the preceding time in ſomething, which muſt take up ſome part of his memory, and prevent him from learning painting with the ſame facility.

Q. Nevertheleſs, have there not been eminent painters, who have begun their ſtudies at an advanced age?

A. Yes. But the greateſt men have all learned painting from their moſt tender infancy. Raphael was ſon to a painter, who perhaps made him begin painting as ſoon as reaſon appeared in him. Titian began when a child. Michael Angelo handled the marble at twelve. Correggio having lived only forty years, left ſo great a number of excellent works that they could not have been done in haſte, and he muſt neceſſarily have begun to work very early. It is however true, that ſome good painters have begun later; but if they ſucceeded on account of their extraordinary abili-

ties, how much more would they not have excelled if they had begun at an earlier age!

Q. What is the firſt thing a maſter ought to teach his pupil?

A. As it is not eaſy to diſcover ſoon the genius and character of children, it is neceſſary to make them begin by drawing geometrical figures, but without rule or compaſſes, that they may accuſtom their ſight to exactneſs, which is the fundamental baſis of deſign; ſince there is no object, whoſe outlines, and form, are not compoſed of figures, and ſimple or compound geometrical lines. Therefore, if the child knows how to make theſe figures by the eye, he will know how to draw accurately any thing, and will eaſily conceive all the propertions.

Q. Will it not be better to make him draw the human figure, which, if compoſed of geometrical figures, will teach at once what by the other means is learnt at twice?

A. This advice is very pernicious; becauſe the beauty of the outlines of the human figure depends on expreſſing rightly all the imperceptible lines and broken forms, which form a whole of geometrical figures intermixed and confuſed with each other; ſo that it is impoſſible for a child to conceive them with clearneſs and preciſion, and ſtill more difficult for the maſter to judge by them of the exactneſs of ſight of his pupil; whereas in a ſimple triangle, for inſtance, it is eaſy to know the defects and faults committed by the eye or the hand.

Q. What is the fault of the eye?

A. There are people who see things longer than broad, and others the contrary. Some at a certain diſtance judge all objects to be greater than they are, and others leſs; and therefore I think it proper that children ſhould draw geometrical figures, becauſe in the plaineſt objects errors are moſt eaſily detected: therefore the maſter may, for inſtance, in a triangle, know in a moment, by means of the rule and compaſſes, the want of exactneſs in the eye of his pupil.

Q. The reaſon would be good if it were not contradicted by practice; ſince neither Raphael, the Caracci's, Domenichino, nor, finally, any great painter has ever been known to take this method, in order to perform the excellent works which they have made.

A. This is partly true, but ſtands in need of ſome explanation. Leonardo da Vinci, who has left us ſeveral rules of proportion of the human body, decides, that geometry is neceſſary to painters. Raphael's maſters taught him to draw with an extraordinary preciſion; therefore he could not help having at firſt a very ſervile and dry taſte, which he could only quit when he ſaw the ancient paintings, and the works of Michael Angelo, which he imitated becauſe he had formed to himſelf the moſt exact eye that is poſſible to be had. A genius ſo pure, and correct, has not appeared in the world for more than two centuries and an half; therefore it would be preſumption to ſuppoſe, that any child whatever, who is brought up to painting, ſhould be endowed with ſo rare a talent: ſo that it is neceſſary to examine the

gifts which nature has imparted to him. The Caraccis followed the rules of proportion, which they found ſettled; and I finally admire in them ſeveral things more than extreme correctneſs.

Q. How? Was not Hannibal extremely correct?

A. Correctneſs is taken in different ſenſes; and in one of theſe he was correct, and owed it not ſo much to the exactneſs of his eye, as to the practice acquired by drawing much. Domenichino drew ſo often the group of Laocoon, that he knew it by heart. Nevertheleſs none of the painters, that are mentioned, have equalled the purity and preciſion of the antique: and as without being accuſed of a low fear we ought to undertake what others have done, I therefore propoſe to aſpire to the moſt perfect; and if when Raphael learnt correctneſs from his maſters, they had at the ſame time taught him to avoid their dry taſte, and to draw nature by geometrical figures, he would not have been obliged afterwards to change his manner. If Caracci and Domenichino had learnt painting, according to the method which I propoſe, we ſhould not have ſeen in their outlines ſo many falſe lines corrected, and in thoſe of the latter particularly, that cold and timid taſte which we ſee in them.

Q. But this geometrical ſtudy might ſometimes be prejudicial to elegance and eaſe

A. Quite the contrary. Elegance conſiſts in the great variety of curved lines and angles, and it is geometry alone that can give the facility of performing theſe things with a ſure hand, and

with the qualities required. But I do not pretend that this ſtudy alone of geometrical figures can form great painters. I ſay that correctneſs being the moſt difficult part to be found in them, and that depending on exactneſs of ſight, it can be acquired in no manner ſo eaſily as by the ſtudy of geometry. To this is added, that a child by drawing for a month geometrical figures with accuracy, will learn more exactneſs than another who has been drawing in an academy for a year; and the firſt in ſix months time will know how to lay a figure well, and will have a good foundation for proceeding in the other parts of the art.

Q. What muſt be done after having drawn the ſaid geometrical figures?

A. Outlines from good drawings and pictures muſt be drawn, and the proportions of the human body muſt be ſtudied, in order to learn a good taſte of drawing, which the maſter muſt teach from the proportions of antique ſtatues; and then the attention muſt be redoubled, and the leaſt want of correctneſs muſt not be excuſed: when this is done, and a certain practice of drawing outlines with freedom has been acquired, then they muſt begin clare obſcure.

Q. Muſt the beginner be kept long in drawing outlines?

A. Till he has acquired a competent facility.

Q. When this is done, what muſt he ſtudy?

A. He muſt begin to ſhade, minding to make his drawings with the utmoſt purity; for if he acquires then this important qualification, it laſts alſo afterwards all his lifetime in painting. I

ſhall likewiſe obſerve, that when he draws in clare obſcure he muſt ſtudy anatomy, and perſpective, in order to prepare to draw afterwards from life.

Q. If on drawing geometrical figures it has been ſaid that ſix months after one can draw well an academical figure, why muſt one ſpend one's time in drawing deſigns and pictures, ſince it ſeems that it would be more expeditious to begin immediately to draw ſtatues?

A. It is not ſo; for in order to draw ſtatues well, one muſt know perſpective: and though I have ſaid that the beginner will in that ſtate know how to lay a figure, he muſt not, however, do it; for he would accuſtom himſelf to a cold imitation, without underſtanding foreſhortenings; or he would loſe that exactneſs of ſight he might have acquired.

Q. How muſt perſpective be ſtudied?

A. One muſt begin by ſtudying a little elementary geometry, and one ſhall then immediately learn to put all one's figures in perſpective.

Q. A little geometry ſeems to me inſufficient, ſince we ſee that thoſe who wiſh to teach perſpective fundamentally, cauſe not only the whole geometry, but alſo architecture, at leaſt the rules of the five orders, to be learnt, as they aſſert that one cannot lay a thing in due perſpective if one is not perfectly acquainted with geometry.

A. Thoſe who are of that opinion are not deceived. But I think that to form a painter, the prudent maſter muſt endeavour to make him know all the requiſites of his art in equal proportions,

portions, and not let him loſe his early time, which is the moſt precious, in things that are not of the firſt utility.

Q. Will the painter loſe his time then, if he ſtudies perſpective fundamentally?

A. No: but as this is a much eaſier thing than others which conſtitute the art of painting, it is not proper that the ſtudent ſhould employ too much time in it, before learning thoſe which are moſt neceſſary:—the more ſo, ſince the articles of perſpective which are moſt neceſſary for a painter, are only the plan, the ſquare in all its aſpects, the triangle, the round, the oval, and above all to conceive rightly the difference of the point of view, and the variety which the point of diſtance produces when taken far or near.

Q. How is anatomy to be ſtudied? Many ſay that it is not neceſſary, and that thoſe painters who have applied themſelves to it, have all fallen into a dry and graceleſs taſte.

A. Thoſe who ſay that anatomy is not neceſſary are groſsly miſtaken; for, without it, it is not poſſible to reaſon upon the parts of a naked figure. But in all, moderation and judgment muſt prevail, there being great difference between giving all to a part, and knowing how to employ it well; and rules muſt ſerve a painter only to uniform himſelf to nature, and make him underſtand it well.

Q. But anatomy is ſo long a ſtudy?

A. It is certainly not ſo long when rightly taught, that is to ſay, when the painter is taught no more than what is neceſſary to him; for a

phyſician and the ſurgeon muſt ſtudy it very differently, as they are to know all the interior play of the parts of man, and the painter wants only to know the effects they have on the ſurface.

SECTION I.

Painting is one of the three fine arts, which has for its object the imitation of truth, namely, the appearance of all viſible things. The materials neceſſary for this imitation are the three colours, red, yellow, and blue, to which are added black and white, which, without being properly colours, ſerve to repreſent light and darkneſs.

All the intermediate colours are compoſed of the three aforeſaid, which are the primitive, and with them art imitates all the appearances of nature upon a flat ſurface: as for inſtance, if through a glaſs we were to ſee a landſcape, a man, a horſe, or any other object whatſoever, and we were to put on the glaſs all the colours like thoſe which we ſee; when that operation was ended, we ſhould find that we had made a picture like the objects which we had firſt ſeen through the glaſs. By this means, though by a different proceſs, the painter proceeds in laying on a ſurface the colours with which he produces in the beholder the ſame effect as if he ſaw the real objects. From hence it proceeds, that any ſurface whatſoever, covered with colours, which gives us ideas either of forms or of figures, is

called painting, which as an art is only the manner of diſpoſing the colours ſo, that by their diſpoſition and modification they may excite in the ſpectator ideas of things which he either had previouſly ſeen, or are poſſible to be ſeen.

All objects which are perceived by the eye, are known little by little and gradually; therefore it has been neceſſary, that art ſhould likewiſe divide the imitation of objects in parts, and in different degrees; otherwiſe it would be as impoſſible to make works of merit, as to aſcend to the top of an edifice without ſteps. At firſt ſight objects produce no other idea but that of their exiſtence. Their form makes us afterwards recollect that we have ſeen other things like them, which by common conſent are called man, horſes, &c. On purſuing the obſervation we ſhall find the manner in which that object is, and immediately after the general and particular proportions, and even its ſmalleſt parts. In the ſame manner the painter muſt begin by repreſenting to himſelf, a place where an action takes place; then in his imagination he muſt place the bodies that are to be there; and this is what anſwers to invention. He immediately will think on the manner of placing each object, as well reſpecting the whole as reſpecting the different parts or members; and this belongs to compoſition. Finally, he will regulate the figure, or the particular form of each object, and that is what is called deſigning; and as thoſe forms cannot be perfectly expreſſed, owing to their being on a flat ſurface, deſigning is inſeparable from the art of ſhades and lights,

which is underſtood by clare obſcure. The forms being determined, then follow the colours of bodies, and the manner, and the management which may be more or leſs proper to expreſs objects, their eſſence and texture. All this is in general; but, in order to learn it, it muſt be ſtudied ſeparately with the utmoſt attention, for otherwiſe it will be as impoſſible to learn well as to erect a building without previouſly preparing the materials. I ſhall treat of each object in particular.

The word *Painting* may be taken in two ſenſes; either as an art, or as a production of art. In the ſecond ſenſe, all ſurfaces on which ſeveral colours have been laid for ſome end, or reaſon, are called paintings, or pictures, which will be more or leſs full of art, according to the reaſons with which they are made. Now, in the firſt ſenſe, as a productive art, it is one of thoſe arts whoſe ſcope is an imitation of truth; that is to ſay, all viſible objects, in the manner they preſent themſelves to our ſight. To attain this end, we make uſe of ſeveral means, which I ſhall ſpeak of, beginning by imitation.

Painting imitates the appearance of Nature by means of the five aforementioned colours, which ſerve for its materials; and they are White, Yellow, Red, Blue and Black. Although the firſt and the laſt are not, properly ſpeaking, colours; yet a painter muſt conſider them as ſuch, on account of the great utility he draws from them to repreſent lights and

ſhades; ſince in this art we have no other means to repreſent theſe two qualities, and even by theſe they are obtained but imperfectly, for thoſe reaſons which I ſhall explain hereafter. As to the other colours, ſuch as Orange, Purple, Violet and Green, they are only tints compoſed of two colours, as we ſee not only by experience from painting, but in the rainbow, and by the priſm, where the ſaid colours are not to be found in any other place but in the middle of their components, where the rays of the three primitive colours interſect. Green is between Blue and Yellow, Orange between Yellow and Red, and Purple or Violet between Red and Blue. Theſe colours are the materials which the painter employs to appear to him who looks at a painting; that on a ſurface there are ſeveral bodies ſeparated from each other, and which in part are enlightened, and in part deprived of a direct light, and receive only a ſhare of that light which is intermixed with the maſs of air, or receive light by reflexion from other bodies, or totally deprived of light. This imitation depends on the uniformity which exiſts in forms, and their quantities and qualities with thoſe of nature: but as in this the parts of a body are infinite, the art of the painter conſiſts in knowing how far he can imitate. To find this, he muſt conſider the effect which all things make on him when he conſiders them wholly, and at that diſtance where his eyes can ſee all the body in queſtion; otherwiſe he will do ſome part well, but

never the whole. Beſides which, we muſt conſider, that in painting we have neither true light, nor true darkneſs, that is to ſay, a total privation of light; and we ought alſo to reflect, that a painted board is an equal ſuperfice which receives light on all its parts. As black in painting is not in itſelf more dark than any other black body which is enlightened, it requires a particular art to make black, in a painting, appear a privation of light. For the ſame reaſon, much ſkill is requiſite to make the ſhades appear as ſuch, and not as ſpots of a darker colour than that of the natural body. In the article upon colouring, I ſhall teach the manner of performing all theſe things.

The ſame, nay a greater difficulty is found in light, becauſe a painted board can be ſeen only in ſuch a poſition that the light which it receives be not reflected to the eyes of the beholder, otherwiſe the lights and ſhades would appear as in a glaſs, and the lights would appear extremely clear in a greater or leſſer degree according to the ſmoothneſs of the ſurface; and lights in painting, however white they may be, can only have the clearneſs of a half tint of a white body; conſequently, the painter that would imitate a body of a ſmooth or poliſhed ſurface to reflect light, ſhould employ much art, and then he will not obtain it to perfection. Therefore, I adviſe painters to avoid thoſe caſes, and to proportion thoſe objects they want to paint to the power of art,

There are an infinite number of caſes in which it is impoſſible to paint a luminous body, and the lights of a white body. Finally, there is almoſt no object in nature which a painter can copy as he ſees, and if any were found who had the patience, like Mr. Denner of Hambourg, to make every wrinkle, and every hair with its ſhadow and in the apple of an eye to repreſent the whole window of the apartment, with the clouds which are in the air; yet, although all that ſhould be done, and even better than he did (who was unique, and admirable in this kind of painting,) yet ſuch a painting could never appear true, except with the condition of ſeeing it always at that diſtance in which the painter made it; the reaſon of which is, that on ſeeing a picture, there is always ſome circumſtance which undeceives us, and makes us know, that what is fictitious is not true. Let us ſuppoſe that the picture were perfect in all its parts; that it were placed in its principal point of view; that it had but one diſtance to be viewed from; that the light in which it was placed were juſt in the ſame manner it ought to be to produce the ſame lights and ſhades on the figures as if they were true; notwithſtanding all theſe conditions, we ſhould be undeceived by the flat ſurface, by the very ſtrokes of the pencil, and by the want of that air which ought to be between remote objects, lights and ſhades, and the lights would be weakened, as likewiſe the ſhades, by the interpoſition of the air, and the effects of the

great work of the painter would be deſtroyed. Hence it is inferred, that to make an ingenious imitation of nature (which is not ſervile, but judicious,) truth muſt be imitated only as it can exiſt, by giving it that proper diſpoſition of the object, and the idea that is wiſhed ſhould be conceived by the beholder; and that any form may preſerve its peculiarity, and characteriſtic quality in all the parts of the art; and that every object be repreſented in an intelligible manner, and diſtinguiſhed from any other whatſoever; finally, that whatever is natural be imitated in the moſt proper manner to give the beholder a clear idea of the painter's meaning.

Great painters have followed two paths to obtain theſe ends. Some have rejected thoſe parts which were not abſolutely neceſſary for their end, and thereby have made appear with greater advantage what they wiſhed ſhould be obſerved: others have ſought all the ſignificant parts, and have marked them with much preciſion, in order to give a very clear idea of what they wiſhed to expreſs. The prince of the firſt is Correggio, and of the ſecond Raphael. Both, by their reſpective ſtyles, have raiſed painting to its utmoſt perfection; ſince, as I believe, the moſt one can attain is to make a painting appear as through a glaſs, more or leſs dim or dull. I omit many other reaſons, reſerving them for that place where I ſhall ſpeak of each part of painting.

II.

Of Deſign.

BY Deſign is chiefly underſtood outline, or the circumference of things with the proportion of their length, breadth, and form. We muſt not conſider which forms are the moſt graceful, and give them the preference, in order to make the work cauſe an agreeable effect; and this is to be obſerved not only in the figures, but likewiſe in the ſpace which remains between them and their members. The forms which are moſt agreeable are thoſe which are moſt varied; and the diſagreeable are thoſe which are repeated in themſelves, as the ſquare and the round: the firſt, becauſe they are compoſed of four lines which are parallel two by two; and the ſecond, becauſe they are the ſame thing on all ſides, and preſent no variety to the ſight, and conſequently, no gracefulneſs. The oval, or the ellipſis, is not ſo uniform. The triangle is the leaſt diſagreeable among all the regular figures, becauſe its angles are of an uneven number, and its lines form no parallels.

In painting, we muſt utterly avoid all repetitions of lines and forms, all parallels and angles of equal degrees, and above all, right angles, becauſe in theſe we have not even the liberty to vary their ſize; and in others, we have the power of making them greater or leſs, that is to ſay, more acute or more obtuſe; and in

other figures, we are more at liberty to vary their ſize.

For this purpoſe, it is neceſſary that a painter ſhould be well acquainted with perſpective; becauſe, by that means, he will be enabled to vary all his regular forms; as, for inſtance, a ſquare into a trapezium, or in an irregular form, he may enlarge, or contract a triangle; a circle may be changed into an ellipſis, and thus he will avoid all repetitions. Finally, if one member preſents itſelf in its geometrical aſpect, the correſponding one muſt be ſhortened to keep up a varied appearance.

No form muſt be uniform, and even right lines muſt be changed into waved, which will cauſe no prejudice to the principal forms, if one obſerves, that the parts of the circles touch at different points, diſtances, and heights, and the right line form no angle, but vary alternately in concave and convex lines. A line ſo drawn is the moſt proper to give grace and elegance to the out lines; for, without altering the height or elevation of a member, it can be made to appear lighter in a greater or leſs degree; for by making the convex lines greater than the concave, they will become heavy, and making them the contrary, they will appear light. Therefore a juſt proportion muſt be given to theſe two kinds of forms, as I ſhall explain more fully in the chapter on Graceſulneſs of Deſign.

In a naked body one cannot make angles, except when a muſcle, or one part is concealed

behind another; for in ſuch a caſe, by a kind of interſection, it forms an angle, and then it is neceſſary to obſerve well where that muſcle, or that part riſes; in which many painters have erred through ignorance of anatomy. Theſe interſections are made in different ways. They are made in members which are ſeen entirely when the obliquity of a muſcle has its origin in the part which is not ſeen; and in the foreſhortenings, for many times a muſcle is interrupted when the fleſhy part covers the concave which binds it to the tendons; and for the ſame reaſon there are ſo many interſections in the foreſhortenings, as all the convex forms conceal or diminiſh the concave. On this account, prudent painters avoid foreſhortenings in graceful objects as much as they can; and when they cannot poſſibly do without them, they put as few as poſſible, and only thoſe which are indiſpenſably neceſſary. In thoſe of a harſh character, and of a ſtrong expreſſion, where an altered ſtyle can be adopted, it is employed with ſucceſs; and the ſame thing happens in thoſe caſes when one member interſects another, and angles are formed; but then we muſt obſerve where the line interſects, for if the member which is concealed behind the other, croſſes at the beginning of its convexity, it will be diſpleaſing to the ſight, ſince it will appear that they are incompatible, one making its appearance without, and the other within. If ſuch a meeting of lines cannot poſſibly be avoided, it may be remedied by

covering that part with ſome drapery, or by making the interſection in the ſtraight part of the member, which we wiſh to conceal: and if neither that can ſucceed, we muſt endeavour to make it fall where the curve line is greateſt, that on the other ſide the ſame kind of line may be found.

I have warned the painter not to make any figures perfectly geometrical, and therefore he muſt obſerve, that when any regular form occurs, he muſt not end the lines in angles, but round off their ends; ſince, by that means the ſight will have that variety of forms which conſtitutes gracefulneſs. If, on the contrary, a round form ſhould occur, he may vary it by making ſome planes, and waving the line. Finally, we muſt hold as a certain rule, that no figure muſt be made perfectly angular, nor perfectly round, as no object is more unpleaſant to the ſight of a painter.

Theſe obſervations muſt be made on the works of thoſe maſters who are moſt eminent for Deſigns, and particularly on thoſe who have ſhewn a good taſte in Deſign, ſuch as the Caraccis, and ſome of their pupils, who, though they might have had occaſion to repreſent; for inſtance, a ſtone cut according to all the nicety of art, yet they certainly would have made it with broken angles. In deſign is compriſed all that part of painting which ſerves to determine the forms of bodies; and, although this part is inſeparable with lights and ſhades, yet it is particularly underſtood of forms, which are the ends,

and laſt parts which we ſee of bodies. This part is compoſed of two others which are principal, that is to ſay, of the knowledge of the proper form of a thing, and the manner of ſeeing it. The ſecond ſeems to belong to optics, which, in painting, is comprehended in perſpective, a part of optic; and the firſt, as to human bodies, and thoſe of all animals, depends on anatomy; and in other bodies, from the knowledge of their proper forms, it is impreſſed on the memory by means of geometry. We muſt however obſerve, that pictorial geometry, for the painter muſt not know the reaſons of the forms to make them with a free hand, and by the eye, as it would be to no purpoſe to know geometry as well as Euclid, if one cannot deſign one's figures without compaſſes and rule; and this is acquired only by a habit contracted by ſeeing with preciſion and exactneſs. This is the fundamental baſis of Deſign, without which the painter will never be able to do what he knows theoretically; for, as in painting we muſt expreſs the forms, which we ſee in nature, as they preſent themſelves to our ſight, and as the beauty of forms depends on that little more or leſs which determines and decides their character, ſo by a little more or leſs one gives or preſents a clear knowledge of the forms. Therefore, whoever wiſhes to excel in Deſign, muſt, in the firſt place, obſerve the form of the body he means to draw, and in the ſecond, the manner in which it preſents itſelf to our view. To the proper form of a body

belongs alſo the proportion of its parts, which is that analogy they have among themſelves, and is commonly called Proportion. Of this I ſhall make a ſeparate chapter when I come to ſpeak of the proportions of the human body; therefore, I ſhall only ſay for the preſent, that in every entire body there is a general character, that is to ſay, an entire body is compoſed of either ſquare, triangular, or round forms; and although theſe forms be varied in an infinite number of ways, yet they will always preſerve that character which nature has given them, and which diſtinguiſhes them. Therefore thoſe who wiſh to ſeek beauty in deſign, muſt conſider well the characteriſtic form of each body, and give a clear repreſentation of it in their work, without minding accidental minutiæ; nor yet omit any thing ever ſo ſmall, when it ſerves to the conſtruction of the body. When I ſay minutiæ, I mean accidental things; as for inſtance, if a tanned body had by accident a thick or round muſcle, as may happen by the frequent uſe of ſuch a part, or through the complexion, or ſome circumſtance of the health of the perſon, the painter muſt not imitate it, but on the contrary, he muſt ſuppoſe that the man is uniform in all his parts, in order that he may not interrupt the general intelligence which he means to give of the figure of a tanned man. The ſame thing happens with a ſtrong, light, fat, young, or old man. Whenever in a body of a determined character there is ſome part, although beautiful in the

extreme,) of a form and character different from the greater part of the other members which compoſe the whole, it would be a monſtruoſity to interrupt the general idea of the character of that body.

Beſides, it is neceſſary to be attentive not to change, upon any account, the character, form, or proportion, which nature has given to any body whatever, or any of its parts; therefore, for inſtance, a muſcle muſt never be reduced to a ſquare or round form, ſince this would be changing nature and her determinate laws, and departing from probability: one may, however, give ſuch a part or muſcle more or leſs length. In the ſame manner if Nature has made one thing large, and another ſmall, they muſt never be made equal, and much leſs the great ſmall, or the ſmall great. What I ſay of the general idea, and the character of a whole figure, I mean alſo of the ſquare forms, or of others; but I do not pretend therefore that we muſt change the proper form of the muſcles, and of the parts, but if that muſcle is by its nature round, its facings muſt be made ſmall, or its ſquarings the more angular, as all the other muſcles are ſo, without however ceaſing to appear round in compariſon with the reſt, which are of another figure.

In what reſpects the forms, it is alſo neceſſary the painter ſhould conſider that ſcarce any bodies are perfectly angular, or perfectly round, and that the variations of theſe forms cauſe a certain effect in paintings which

gives an idea of motion, flexibility, and of life. Each line has within itſelf the property of expreſſing a quantity of the body which it circumſcribes; as, for inſtance, any ſtraight line gives an idea of extenſion, or hardneſs; the curve, on the contrary, gives an idea of flexibility; the elliptic, placed horizontally, repreſents tender and moiſt bodies; thoſe in the form of an S give an idea of life; and thus the other lines, according to the different manner in which they are employed, and the place they are in, have a different meaning.

Much might be ſaid if I wiſhed to ſpeak of all the caſes, in which a particular obſervation is requiſite in each form, and of all that occurs in painting; however, I ſhall content myſelf with obſerving, that foreſhortenings muſt be avoided, particularly in beautiful objects, which do not ſuffer that alteration of forms, which foreſhortening produces; for a member, or a part foreſhortened, is ſubject to a point of view; and if that is quitted, it appears falſe or deformed.

III.

Of Lights and Shades.

That part of painting which is called Clare Obſcure, or more properly the art of lights and ſhades, is of two kinds, like all the other parts of painting; that is to ſay, one neceſſary, and ſimply true, and the other probable, or ideal. However, before ſpeaking of the

particular rules of lights and ſhades, it will be neceſſary to make the following obſervations. I. If there were no light, all bodies would be dark. II. Air is a maſs intermixed with extraneous bodies. III. Light, in falling on a body, reaſcends, and produces what is called reflexion, or reverberation; and this happens more or leſs, according as the body is ſmooth or rough. IV. All convex bodies reflect the rays of light according to their being more or leſs curved, as if they were reflected from the centre of that form; and the concave unite them in the ſpot where the centre of their curve would be. V. On no ſmooth and flat body can light be ſeen, except where an angle is formed equal to the line or the vitual ray of the perſon who looks at the ſaid body. VI. In rugged and coarſe bodies, which have a rough and porous ſurface, each of their particles is nevertheleſs more or leſs ſhining, and their light ſeems more dilated, for the rays are reflected on all ſides of the ſurface, but on account of their ſmallneſs they are almoſt loſt in air, and ſo form an ample, but weak light.

This part of painting is that which gives it moſt brilliancy when well underſtood. This is what renders a form eaſier to be underſtood, for the outline is only a kind of particular ſection; and a globe without lights and ſhades cauſes the effect of a diſk.

After linear Perſpective, lights and ſhades is the part which contributes moſt to make bodies

appear raiſed, and of various and diſtinct forms. Aërial perſpective has alſo a ſhare in the parts of lights and ſhades; and here it is neceſſary to mind, that in nature there is ſcarce any perfect angle, and her angles are only ſmall curves, which end in two lines that widen themſelves. Therefore, the painter who underſtands rightly the art of managing lights and ſhades, muſt get rid of geometrical angles, which lead him to a great harſhneſs. Such angles can only ſuit ſome outlines that are very much enlightened; however, none muſt be made decided, nor with a tint that is truly luminous, but with a half tint, ſince it is impoſſible that the line which falls on the angle of a body, can reflect by an equal angle to our eyes from the laſt extremity of the outline; and if light were to produce this effect, we ſhould ſee the whole object dark, and a very weak light in the outline: this caſe muſt not be ſuppoſed, and if it were to be, it would not produce any pleaſure, for it would deſtroy the brightneſs of the object.

We muſt moreover conſider, that all bodies being in part, or in the ground of their ſurface ſmooth, they reflect a part of the rays, and tinge again the neareſt air with a light of their own colour. I have ſaid all this only with the intention of perſuading ſtudents that outlines ought to be ſoft and gentle, and that if we ſee ſome in nature which appear ſharp, it ariſes from the enlightened bodies being infinitely diſtinguiſhed from the body that is not enlightened, and that both are either true lights or real dark-

neſs; which does not happen in painting, as has been ſaid before.

If we conſider the light which is in the contour of a figure, comparing it with that which is in the centre ſtill more raiſed to our eyes, we ſhall always find two or three degrees difference. Therefore the painter muſt do the ſame, by putting a third colour in the contour to maintain the relief. Some eminent painters, in order to obtain at once both theſe effects, have made the juſt degradation in the principal body that is enlightened, and have given it for a ground an object that is dark and obſcure by nature. This has been done repeatedly by Correggio. Therefore, whoever wiſhes to produce an effect of true relief in paintings or drawings, muſt previouſly examine what ſtrength he can give to the form and the poſture of the body, which he propoſes to repreſent, and immediately he is to conſider what direction the ray of light takes relative to the horizontal line which his ſight forms with the object. This obſervation will ſerve him to underſtand the effects of light on true objects, as well as to imagine thoſe objects he does not ſee. He muſt then conſider how an object is to be placed, whether it be flat or round, that it may receive more light, and reflect it back to the eye under an equal angle. Thoſe conſiderations muſt be had in obſerving the plan and elevation of bodies.

The lights, or luminous bodies which we make uſe of in painting, are three: the Sun,

Fire, and Air. Painting often employs the laſt two ways; the one is called cloſe light, and the other open light. Cloſe light muſt be conſidered as if it were another new luminous body of the ſize of the window through which the light comes, and as if it were alſo at the ſame diſtance. This light is almoſt a reflected light; for, although the ſun is on the oppoſite ſide out of the window, yet there comes ſomething of his perfect light, and conſtantly; for which reaſon the painter muſt chooſe his light from the North. The open light of the air without ſun is likewiſe of two kinds: the one when the ſun is clouded, and its light pierces through, which produces a weak clearneſs, but however always comes from where the ſun is; the other when the ſky is ſerene, and objects that are in the ſhade receive light from the ambient air, and the light ſeems to fall vertically on them. If a very remote object keeps the ſun's rays from another, the light which it then gives is as if the weather were cloudy.

Of the light of the ſun itſelf, it is almoſt uſeleſs to ſpeak, it being impoſſible to imitate it well. I ſhall only ſay, that the ſun's light admits no other degradation than the poſition of the body which receives it. The light from fire follows the ſame rule of the cloſe light, its force being to be conſidered always according to its ſize; and the ſmaller the light is, the greater will its degradation be. The light of open air is the moſt unfavourable for a

painter, on account of all the body of the air being equally enlightened. Shadows are loſt when the luminous body is ſmall, that i to ſay, leſs than the enlightened, and the greateſt part of this will be deprived of light, and the ſhadow which it produces in other objects, will keep widening as they go from the object which cauſes them. The ſhadow of thoſe bodies which receive light from a window greater than thoſe bodies, will become always narrower, and be loſt ſooner or latter according to the ſize of the light. The bodies which are in the open light without ſun, have hardly any ſhadows, and only cauſe a very ſmall privation of light to thoſe objects which are near them; for the whole air is full of a diſperſed light The light of the ſun is of an equal force on all ſides, and ſhadows follow the direction of the body which produces them. It is alſo neceſſary to conſider, that ſhadows are never entirely deſtitute of light, and that they are dark only in compariſon to another greater light. The rays which come to our eyes by the reflection of an enlightened body, dazzle our eyes, ſo that they confound thoſe objects which are in a leſs light. If that leſſer degree of light, which we call ſhade in compariſon to the greater light, becomes univerſal, as when a cloud covers the ſun entirely from us, we then ſee the ſame bodies clear and diſtinct which ſeemed ſhaded, becauſe there is no longer that light which dazzled us. The ſame thing happens when we keep off the light with our hand in order

to ſee dark objects better, and when we approach bodies that are not much enlightened we diſtinguiſh them better, becauſe leſs light is interpoſed between us and thoſe bodies, and our ſight is not dazzled thereby. From thence the painter muſt infer, that near objects are diſtinguiſhable alſo in ſhadows, and therefore he muſt not make them as dark as thoſe ſhadows which are at a great diſtance, and which are loſt in a colour mixed with light and darkneſs, almoſt blue, on account of the enlightened bodies which are in the air interpoſed between our eyes and the dark place. Finally, the aerial perſpective muſt be obſerved, which has its rules as the linear in what reſpects the diminution of the force of lights and ſhades. Let us for inſtance ſuppoſe a courſe of ſquares, a palm each, placed in perſpective, on the firſt a figure, and on the ſecond and third likewiſe; I ſay, that if on account of the proximity to the point of diſtance the ſecond row diminiſhes by a third of the ſize of the firſt, the third will not diminiſh by a fourth of the ſecond, and the others the farther they are from the eyes of the beholder the leſs will they vary from each other. Therefore the ſame thing happens in aerial perſpective; for, if from the firſt to the ſecond figure there is no degree of difference, from the ſecond to the third there will be leſs, and the difference will be always ſmaller, as we obſerve in mountains and towns ſeen at a diſtance. A houſe which is near, differs infinitely in the ſtrength of *lights* and ſhades and ſize from

another like it a mile difference; but if we ſee a town fifteen miles off, a houſe which is a mile farther differs almoſt nothing from one like it in the town; and the ſame happens with two hills that are ſeen at a great diſtance. I do not think it neceſſary here to give a ſcientific demonſtration of it; experience, which ſhews the truth of it, being ſufficient. The ſame degradation takes place in light; for inſtance, from the firſt to the ſecond object there will be a degree of difference; from the ſecond to the third in equal diſtance there will be much leſs; and ſtill leſs from the fourth to the fifth. The degradation will be greater or leſs, according as the ſhining body is nearer, or further. If near, the degradation will be ſtrong, becauſe the firſt objects will receive a greater quantity of rays of light than the ſecond, and the others which follow, becauſe the lines of the rays become always more equal, and of a leſſer angle as they go from the point of view: and when ſome ſhining body is very far, like the ſun, then the rays are almoſt parallel, and differ ſo little in all the ſurface of the world enlightened at once, that the difference is imperceptible to our ſight.

In general, there are two cauſes by which the moſt intenſe lights loſe their force, and become extinct. The one is the diſtance from the ſhining body, and the other the diſtance from which we ſee objects. When theſe two circumſtances combine in an object, then the body which we want to repreſent remains

very weak of lights and ſhades; for if it is far from the light, and near our eyes, the general clearneſs will be very weak; but its face will be ſeen with preciſion and clearneſs, as our eyes being near, they ſee *preciſely* the point where that ſhining body is ſpread. But when an object is near the light, and far from our eyes, the general light will be ſtrong, but its ſtrength will be ſpread and confuſed in the maſs of clearneſs; for that light being as only a point in the diſtance, it becomes extremely ſmall, and is loſt in the air before it comes to our eyes. The ſame happens with ſhadows, ſince thoſe of bodies near our light muſt be lighter, and the bodies will appear darker; and in places where light can penetrate, the ſhadows will be ſtronger, and more decided. On the contrary, the general ſhadows of objects diſtant from us muſt be darker; but the ſtronger and ſmaller ſituations muſt be confuſed in the general ſhade, untill a quantity of air is interpoſed, which weakens the darkneſs of the ſhades, and finally the colour likewiſe.

We muſt alſo conſider that lights and ſhades conſtitute that part of painting which explains the forms and the means by which, on a flat and even ſurface, bodies appear as detached, and in relief. Bodies can have only three kinds of forms, being compoſed of ſurfaces, either right, curved, or of mixtilinear. The right can only be of one kind; but the curved may be concave, or convex, and the mixed are the moſt varied. If, therefore, the art of lights

and ſhades ſerves to explain the forms, it is neceſſary to conſider, that curves muſt have no angle, that is, no diverſity of degree of reflection. Therefore thoſe who ſeek to expreſs by lights and ſhades ſuch forms, muſt obſerve, that from the ſituation of the light to the half tint, and from this to ſhade, and from ſhade to reflexion, there muſt be no total diverſity of tints, but the degradation muſt precede imperceptibly more or leſs, according to the nature of the curve which it repreſents. Angular bodies, or thoſe compoſed of right lines, which is the ſame, ought to have their lights and ſhades of ſeparate tints like their form, whoſe ſurface changes the direction inſtantaneouſly. Mixed bodies muſt be alſo mixed with theſe kinds of lights and ſhades.

IV.

Of Colouring

The art of colouring is that part which, in painting, ſerves not only to repreſent ſimply the univerſal appearance of coloured bodies, but alſo to make the beholder know their general and particular qualities; as for inſtance, if they are hard, moiſt, dry, or mixed with other qualities. The materials are the five before mentioned colours, white, yellow, red, blue, and black. The ſecondary colours, or firſt tints mixed from them, are orange, green, purple, grey, and brown; and each of theſe

colours is compoſed of two primary; but if a third be added, it loſes all its beauty.

Nature has given us two kinds of colours; the tranſparent dark, and the diaphanous light. We have beſides dark opaque colours, as lake, azure, ivory black, and others of the ſame kind; but theſe can never arrive at the opacity made with the tranſparent. The difference between a tranſparent and an opaque body is, that the rays of light enter and paſs through the tranſparent body, nor do they ſtop, or are they reflected on its ſurface, as happens in the opaque. A body of mixed parts opaque and diaphanous, receives the rays of light, but part of them remain on the ſurface, and part enter it and cover the whole body with a ſhare of light, which then cauſe in it ſeveral colours, according as repeated angles of light are formed. Where the ſurface is imperfectly enlightened, we perceive by its tranſparency thoſe internal parts from which light cannot be reflected to our eyes, and therefore it appears opaque: on the contrary, where the ſurface is diveſted of rays of light, we ſee through it that light which is ſpread in the body, and this effect encreaſes the livelineſs of the colour.

The ſame thing happens in painting. When a clear colour is but lightly laid on a dark, it dims it, and makes it grey; on the contrary, a dark colour laid on a light encreaſes its luſtre. For the preceding reaſons a ſemidiaphanous body never appears of a pure colour in the enlighted part, but in that where the rays of

light have penetrated it, without leaving the ſurface enlightened. Hence we muſt obſerve, that in order to repreſent delicate complexions, livid tints muſt be freely employed, and in a figure of ſuch a complexion, pure tints muſt be employed only in thoſe parts where the ſkin is drawn over the bones, for thoſe bodies being in themſelves white, and the ſkin tranſparent, the light paſſes through, and is received by the body which is under. When the light is very ſtrong in thoſe places where under the ſkin there is ſome ſolid fat, it alſo makes nearly a pure tint; inclining more or leſs to green, according as that fat is moiſter in thoſe places covered by the white ſkin. In parts that are moiſt, the tint takes a livid caſt; the ſame thing happens when the blood is covered by a white ſkin ſufficiently thick, to prevent the light from paſſing in ſuch a quantity as to make the blood appear red, for then it performs the office of a black body; and the white which paſſes over it, not being perfectly compact, appears blue. When the blood is only covered by a tranſparent pellicle, it appears red in the ſurface, and when the ſkin is interſected by very ſmall veins in its ſurface, or it paſſes over moiſt places, it occaſions a purple tint.

By all I have ſaid till now, the reaſons of the different tints which are ſeen on the human body may be accounted for, and one may ſee how much one ought to obſerve this variety which diſcovers the proper quality of each part.

We muſt therefore obſerve in general, that when the upper ſurface is clearer by its nature than the body which is under it, it always appears as if mixed with dark particles, that is to ſay, black: on the contrary, if the ſurface is by its nature of a tint darker than the body under it, then the tints become purer, and more tranſparent than if it had under a body equal in darkneſs. Wherever fleſh is covered by a thick ſkin, it muſt be leſs varied, as being a thicker and more tranſparent body to cover perfectly the other which is under.

In the chapter on lights and ſhades, I promiſed to teach the manner of making ſhadows appear more true than they generally are; therefore, I ſhall here begin to ſpeak with the ſame order of nature, on the colours of ſhining bodies. What light is in itſelf, is one among the many things which remain concealed behind that veil which keeps from the minds of all men the knowledge of the firſt principles. We ſhall therefore content ourſelves with ſpeaking of its effects, as far as we can comprehend them by experience. It is probable, that light has no colour whatever; but as on coming to us it croſſes intermediate bodies, it acquires a colour, or is tinged by the refraction it makes from one body to another untill it reaches our ſight. If the matter through which paſſes, or which ſurrounds is mixed with it, be thin, uniform, and in ſmall quantity, the light is clearer and leſs tinged, and receives more pleniifully the firſt ree

of colours; which is yellow, and plentifully alſo the ſecond degree of colours, which is orange; then it admits red; finally, it receives blue, and is loſt in darkneſs. From theſe cauſes ariſe the different colours of ſhining bodies. Theſe, whether natural or artificial, give their colour to the bodies they ſhine upon; and the more times the rays of the ſaid light are reflected and refracted, the more they augment their colours. That which receives light firſt is air, and muſt therefore be neceſſarily tinged with its colour; and the thicker the air is, the more it will be tinged. If the painter obſerves this well, he will avail himſelf of it much for the *accord* of the picture; ſince it gives him an opportunity of ſuppoſing a univerſal tint, which is mixed with all the colours, more or leſs, according to the quantity which he wiſhes to ſuppoſe of this tinged air interpoſed between its objects. He muſt moreover conſider, that reflection not only brings with it the colour of the body firſt enlightened, but alſo part of the colour of the light; and this is alſo an advantage in compoſing the picture, and is very uſeful for the diſpoſition of the colours of the drapery of which we ſhall ſpeak hereafter.

'There are two reaſons for which we ſee the colour of a body; and without ſtopping to examine whether bodies are coloured by nature, or by the forms on which the rays of light make ſuch an appearance, the painter muſt conſider each body as if it had in itſelf that colour we ſee in it. 'The reaſon which renders it vi-

ſible to us is, becauſe the body receives the light; that is to ſay, being placed ſo, that the rays of light ſtrike its ſurface; the more perpendicularly they fall, the more light they receive; and becauſe the body is placed ſo that the light, which falls upon it, may reflect with an equal angle to our ſight. The body which receives the light forms a ſhining mirror; and on the ſpot where we ſee the light ſtronger, more rays are collected, and are tinged with a colour like that of the ſhining body. If the body which receives the light be diaphanous, and of a ſmooth ſurface, we ſhould ſee the light only on a point; but if it be rough and porous, we ſee the light ſpread for the reaſons given in the chapter on lights and ſhades. In that poroſity, light is reflected from one particle to another, and therefore we ſee its own colour more than that of the light. Where the ray falls in the ſmalleſt angle on the object, part of the colour of the body is loſt, and a tint is formed and compoſed of darkneſs and the colour of the body. Finally, in thoſe places where the light paſſes totally, becauſe it cannot touch them, it would leave the body quite black if there were no light ſcattered in the air, and if the body did not receive any other reflected light. This laſt light will be tinged either of the colour of the ſhining body, or of the body which cauſes the reflexion mixed with its own colour, and with that of the light. The deepeſt ſhades ought to be of the colour of the tint of the general harmony,

becauſe it is ſuppoſed that the air is already tinged with this; and the ſame is underſtood of all the drapery, and of all the other bodies. Therefore thoſe who wiſh to paint the lights of bodies rightly as they are, and particularly fleſh, muſt employ opaque colours, and impaſte well their painting, that it may become a body fit to receive the light, and reflect it abundantly to the eyes.

I have placed the colours in the order which they ariſe from the light, beginning by white, yellow, red, and blue, and even to black. Theſe matters, therefore, which are in their nature apt to receive the appearance of white, or of yellow, ought neceſſarily to have in themſelves a portion of light, or that they be very apt to reflect the rays of light to our ſight; and this cannot happen but by means of a quantity of particles thick, compoſed, heterogeneous, without following interſtices, and deprived by theſe reaſons of every kind of tranſparancy; from whence we ſee that a glaſs, which is in its nature uniform, is for that reaſon tranſparent; but if it be pounded and reduced to very fine powder, it is no longer tranſparent, and appears white, until a body actually diaphanous, ſuch as oil, is mixed with it, becauſe then it acquires again part of its tranſparency, on account of the oily ſubſtance which is introduced, and perfectly inſinuates itſelf among its particles, being uniform and tranſparent. This is, in general, the reaſon why oil gives a certain tranſparency to

colours, becauſe being of a humid ſubſtance, which inſinuates and thickens without being exhaled, it leaves it particles among the colours.

A body is diaphanous when the light paſſes it without remaining on the ſurface. If a colour is of a very porous nature, and of ſmall particles, ſo that many particles enter into every particle of its matter, this then is called a rich colour; and for that reaſon it requires a great quantity of theſe colours to produce the ſame effect which few of thoſe colours give which we call body colours, that are in their nature more compoſed, or denſe; from whence one does not mix ſo much oil with theſe as with the others, and the light which ſtrikes upon ſuch bodies is reflected to our ſight. By that is clearly inferred in what conſiſts the tranſparency of colours, and that to paint very oily will only be prejudicial; becauſe oils, after ſome time, are exhaled and diſſected, and finally ſhow the colours that are under, and which were covered by the denſity of the oil; and ſo much the more if in beginning of a painting one makes uſe of light and rich colours: and this has deſtroyed many beautiful paintings, as one might ſee in many of the Venetian ſchool, the firſt who introduced very oily painting, and particularly Tintoretto. By the ſame means many beautiful paintings of the Carraccis have been deſtroyed; and for that reaſon, I adviſe painters to uſe canvaſs prepared with very clear colours thus to avoid their paintings turning dark. Thus we ſee that

Titian, Rubens, and Vandyke did, who almoſt always painted very lightly, availing however of clear preparations; ſo that their paintings are well conſerved, and perhaps more lucid than they were when freſh painted.

It is neceſſary, therefore, to impaſte well with colours not very oily, and clearly placed, following the proper direction of each form of all the work the firſt or ſecond time that one goes over the painting; becauſe, when one ſketches it is the time when one has to think of the principal maſſes, and *tout enſemble* of a work; and the ſecond time one might place more particular attention to each part, obſerving notwithſtanding to maintain the work always from the beginning with light, ſoft, and harmonious tints; that is to ſay, of cinder colour, to be able then to increaſe, reinforce, and revive at times and places the colours which one would wiſh to make moſt lucid. Proceeding the contrary way, it is eaſy to fall into a crude ſtyle. At the end of a work one might uſe rich colours to make ſome light retouches, and to veil the ſhade of objects neareſt the ſight; and this will contribute very much alſo to make the ſhade appear true, by the reaſon that tranſparent colours let the rays of light paſs in a manner that they reſt not upon the ſurface to reflect themſelves to our ſight, ſo that it does not appear illuminated, but truly ſhady, although very light. In this manner one might diſtinguiſh two ſhades of different diſtance, although they be of the ſame degree

of obſcurity, by placing neareſt to our ſight rich and tranſparent colours, and moſt remote opaque colours, which, in receiving the light, have the effect of intermediate air. It is neceſſary alſo to obſerve, not to make all bodies of rich colours, becauſe thoſe which are in Nature opaque, ought not to be painted rich.

It now remains to ſpeak of each colour in particular; that is, of the ſituation it receives by means of clare obſcure. I would therefore begin by white. White in the light remains white, becauſe as that tinges the object or white drapery, thus it will alſo tinge the white of a painting. The ſecond tint ought to be of a colour rather blue, to make the light appear tinged by the luminuous body. In the third tint one ought to mix a grey, ſomething tinted with the colour of the general harmony, obſcuring it proportionably in the ſhade; but one ought to make the reflexions of the colour of duplicated light. One ſhould therefore endeavour to avoid the occaſions of making the ſhades of a white cloth more obſcure than another whoſe colours are in their nature more obſcure. This is in general a rule; for there are ſometimes occaſions when it is inevitable. That which I ſay of a white cloth is to be underſtood alſo of white fleſh, in which it is neceſſary beſides to maintain the ſhade clear and lucid; and ſince white excludes equally the three colours, yellow, red, and blue, their ſhades ought to preſerve the ſame character, without inclining to any of the aforeſaid colours,

unleſs it be for evident reaſons of ſome reflection. This is a general rule for all bodies which are painted, and which ought always to preſerve in the ſhade the ſame characters which they have in the light.

Yellow is the moſt clear colour after white. Perfect yellow is that which neither partakes of green or of golden colour. This colour, as ſoon as it loſes part of its light, loſes alſo its beauty, becauſe it is in itſelf lucid; to the contrary, in the reflections of its proper colour it becomes very lively, becauſe it receives the light voluntarily, and reflects it ſtrongly, ſince light always inclines to that colour, and augments in its reflections. Red is the moſt lively colour, and enters in all colours. The moſt perfect is that which is at an equal diſtance from the golden and violet. This colour is eaſily corrupted in lights and ſhades, but if it be mixed with yellow light, it eaſily receives it. This [illegible] colour which makes moſt brilliancy, and moſt ſtrongly by day; but by night (I ſhall preſently give my reaſons) its ſhades become very dark, and receive with difficulty the reflections of other colours.

Blue is the third colour, and almoſt the laſt degree of light, becauſe it approaches darkneſs. Its clears generally come ſpotted by the colour of light. The reflections of its proper matter, are more beautiful than its clears, becauſe they receive grace from that little yellow of light. Its ſhades are more powerful, but are eaſily ſtained, and voluntarily receive the reflections

of other colours, but is not eaſily reflected to other bodies, if the light be not very lively. Black, in painting, repreſents darkneſs; but when it receives light it is eaſily tinged with the colour of light, and in the ſame ſhade quickly receives the reflections of other colours.

V.

Of Harmony.

The uſe of the aforeſaid colours belongs to that part of painting which is generally, although, according to my opinion, improperly called Harmony. Harmony appertains to thoſe things which have meaſure, be it of time, quantity, extenſion, or any other dimention, that can produce a correſpondence of one part with another *. To find then harmony in colours, it would be neceſſary to determine and give a number to each colour; which thing would be very abſtruſe, and almoſt impoſſible; becauſe, ſuppoſing that one would with to number the degrees of the angles of refraction that the rays of light form in the priſm, it

* Without pretending to oppoſe this opinion of Mengs, I believe there is true harmony in colours. A ray of light can cauſe in our optic nerve a ſtrong or a weak ſenſation, and another ray can at the ſame time produce another ſenſation which temperates and moderates the firſt, ſo that either of theſe two ſenſations will be ſometimes in itſelf alone diſagreeable, by vibrating our organs more or leſs than is neceſſary, yet will have a good effect together, the one correcting the exceſs and defects of the other; as two ſounds oppoſed in a certain proportion cauſe in the ear that grateful thing which is called *Harmony*.

would be an immenſe ſtudy, and at the ſame time it would alienate from a painting, and be uſeleſs to painters. A painter therefore ought to conſider that that which we call harmony is not properly ſerving of this metaphor, to denominate in our art that which in Italian one calls *accordo*, which produces in painting the ſame effect of harmony in muſic. Suppoſing that harmony has that effect in muſic which is commonly attributed to it, the ſweetneſs and acuteneſs of colours will depend upon the natural effect which they occaſion to our ſight, or in the optic nerves. The moſt clear colours have more force than the moſt obſcure, becauſe their luminous rays, ſtriking the viſual nerves, cauſe in part the ſame effect of a direct light, by filling all the internal of the eye with light, occaſioning by much force a painful ſenſation to the eye. Obſcure colours have not this effect, becauſe they do not reflect all the rays of light with the ſame force. Clear colours being then the moſt apt to give ſenſations to our eyes, they ought to be employed where it is required that the eye of the ſpectator fixes itſelf, and may obſerve and feel that that is the part which the painter has wiſhed to indicate as the moſt principal and noble. If the ſenſation ought to be ſoft, as in graceful ſubjects, it is neceſſary to keep the ſight of the ſpectator as long as one can in that ſenſation, and that he might loſe it by degrees; that is, that from the clear colours it ſhould paſs to the half tint and not to the obſcure, and from thence to the

obſcure, and gradually to the moſt obſcure, without, however, ever rapidly paſſing from the obſcure to the very obſcure. To the contrary, if the ſubject be of a harſh nature, ſuch ought to be alſo the choice of the effects of the painting, operating in a contrary manner to the antecedent.

Pure and brilliant colours, which have more force than dead colours, ought to be employed in the moſt noble part of a painting, and uſed in greater or leſs quantity, according as the ſubject is required to be lively, ſoft, or melancholy. Every colour can be temperated by white and black, putting them in a manner which leaves few parts illuminated, becauſe in ſhade every colour degenerates and becomes dark. Red always remains harſh when it is uſed pure; unleſs in painting velvet of a rich colour, which mitigates its crudeneſs, and cauſes the rays of light not to reflect with ſo much force to the eye. It is likewiſe neceſſary that a painter ſhould obſerve of what nature is the colour of the general harmony; becauſe ſuppoſing it be reddiſh, he ſhould employ a red colour in the figures of the ſecond and third ſtage; and he will be able to place blue in the ſituation neareſt to the eye, and to proceed in the reſt with the ſame reaſonings, in caſe the general tints be different. It is very ſeldom however that red makes the general harmony, becauſe that is the colour which moſt reflects upon all the reſt. Of mixed colours, the gilded is the moſt harſh, being compoſed of

one of the moſt clear colours, and another of the moſt pure. Green is the moſt pleaſing, being compoſed of the moſt clear colour and the moſt obſcure, from whence it moves the the nerves of the eye, without fatiguing them. The violet is the moſt powerful of mixed colours, becauſe it is compoſed of the moſt pure and moſt dark, and for that reaſon cauſes a lugubrious ſenſation.

From what I have ſaid until now, one might perceive with facility the manner of varying colours, and of employing them with reaſon. Not to be more tedious, I ſhall omit other things, and only ſay that to felicitate the mode of regulating the equilibrium of colours in a painting according to the character that one would wiſh to give, one might conſider what I have ſaid from the beginning of the five kinds of materials which we have to expreſs all the objects that nature preſents, which are the five colours. Among theſe, two are lucid, two obſcure, and one in the medium, which I have called the moſt pure, becauſe it does not appertain either to light or darkneſs, but receives and reflects equally the one and the other. The painter avails of theſe materials, and employs more or leſs the one and the other to expreſs diſtinct characters, by different ſenſations which they produce in our ſight. If a painter finiſhes a painting of only ſimple white and black, it will remain a lifeleſs piece, becauſe it will be uniform; as white and black exclude ever other colour; one in light, and the oth

darkneſs; but if he avails himſelf of theſe two proportionably, according to the idea which he would wiſh to render comprehenſible, by adopting the moſt black, or the moſt white, and the half tint, he will cauſe, notwithſtanding the uniformity of the character of theſe two colours, a varied ſenſation. Approaching the two extremes, it will be powerful and harſh: placing between the one and the other a great interval of half tint it will be more ſoft; and placing always each degree by the ſide of that which goes next, and by making it viſible only as much as is ſufficient to diſtinguiſh objects, ſuch a work will become very ſoft. Separating the clears in a maſs from the other clears, and the obſcures form the other obſcures, it will remain majeſtic and grand, and finally adapting thus, and mixing infinitely theſe means, it will cauſe a lively, dead, ſoft, harſh, tender, or whatever other ſenſation one would wiſh the ſpectators to feel. If to theſe, colours be added with the ſame reaſonings, one ſhall be able infinitely to augment with them the ſignifications and ſentiments which one would wiſh to produce; but it is neceſſary that the painter has care not to repeat many times the ſame lights and ſhades in force and greatneſs, and to endeavour to avoid the extremes, attending always to truth, and veriſimilitude; remembering always that clare obſcure is the baſis of that part of painting which is commonly called harmony, and that colours are but the tones which characteriſe the ſpecies of bodies; and

for that one ought to employ them with uniform reaſon to the general character, and clare obſcure.

In the uſe of colours, it is likewiſe neceſſary to obſerve their equilibrium, to find the mode of employing them with grace, and of accompanying them well. Colours, properly ſpeaking, are three; yellow, red, and blue, and theſe ſhould never be uſed alone in a work, and if it occurs to employ any one that is pure, one ſhould ſeek the manner of placing with it another mixed of two; as for example, if one employs pure yellow, one ſhould accompany it by the violet, becauſe this is compoſed of red and blue mixed together: and if one uſes pure red, one ſhould add for the ſame reaſon green, which is a mixture of blue and yellow: but the union of yellow and red which form the third mixture is difficult to employ well, becauſe they are too lively, by reaſons aforeſaid; from whence it is neceſſary to add to them, or accompany them by blue. Theſe colours employed in the aforeſaid mode in greater or leſſer quantity, will ſerve to give the character to the thing one would wiſh to repreſent; but one ſhould always obſerve, to uſe in a painting very few pure colours, and thoſe ſufficiently lively. One might accord all colours to white and black. White takes from their harſhneſs, and renders them tender; and black deadens them, and ofuſcates them. Thoſe compoſed of two of the primitive coloures one might ſoften and weaken with a little of the third primitive co-

lour. * That which I have ſaid, ſerves not only in making the drapery, but alſo in the fleſh, and the fields, beginning by regulating oneſelf always according to the principal parts, which one has to accord to all the others.

VI.

Continuation of harmony and colouring.

Harmony, in a painting, is that effect which pleaſes the eye, the ſame as harmony in muſic pleaſes the ear.

In the antecedent paragraph, I have ſpoken of five colours; differing much from the principles of Newton, who aſſigns ſeven, becauſe I have thought it more convenient to ſpeak according to the reaſons I have acquired from the experience and practice of my profeſſion; and by that I ſay, that the principle colours are three, yellow, red, and blue. The colour of Aurora, or the gilded colour, is compoſed of yellow, and of red; the violet, of porpery, red and blue; and the green of yellow and blue; from whence I conclude that theſe are tints, and not colours.

White, and black, are neceſſary to make the three colours more clear, or more obſcure; becauſe otherwiſe they would not be ſufficient to compoſe the variety which is neceſſary in a great work of painting; as one could not play a Sonata on the harpſicord in one ſole octave. White and black ſerve therefore to make the harmony more pleaſing, or more grave. To obtain the direct harmony of a painting, it is neceſſary that the painter makes it in ſuch a

manner that there might be an equal quantity of all the colours, as well of the ſimple as the compoſed; and all the difficulty of compoſing a work of grand and beautiful taſte conſiſts in knowing how to find the ſituations where to place the ſaid colours.

One has to regulate the general harmony of a painting always according to the general tint which the light gives it. If, for example, it be illuminated by the light of the ſun, it is neceſſary to maintain the harmony with the tone of the light, which is yellow, becauſe that will tinge with its colour all the things illuminated by its direct light, and the things reflective will be illuminated by the bodies which receive the light from the firſt luminous body; and its colour is no longer ſimple, becauſe the interpoſed air is already tinged with the firſt light. In the ſame manner things which diminiſh by degradation, and are loſt in the air, one loſes in the ſame tone, becauſe all the atoms of the interpoſed air are tinged with the ſame colour. Shade partakes of the ſame tint, for two reaſons: the firſt, becauſe all ſhade is reflective, otherwiſe it would be perfectly dark; that is to ſay, pure black, and without colour; and the ſecond, becauſe, if that could happen, it would be neceſſary that this darkneſs ſhould partake more or leſs of the general tone, becauſe the air which paſſes over, or to ſay better, between the eye and the object which one ſees, will make a kind of veil to the tone of the general harmony. In the ſame

manner, when a painting has to repreſent illuminated objects of a day without ſun, or to give the light of the pure air of ſome window ſituated towards the weſt, the harmony will be blue; and one ought to obſerve the ſame rule aforeſaid; and thus one has to proceed with the other lights, being either of the eaſt or weſt, &c. In all harmony, one ought to obſerve particularly thoſe colours which are moſt oppoſite to the tone of the harmony, and to place ſuch colours in the foreground, in order that they may appear thus more advanced, and more ſeparated; but by that is underſtood in uniting them with others by the ſame gradation as I have ſaid before; and thus the colour which will moſt accord with the general harmony, ought to be placed in the laſt ſtage, becauſe by itſelf, it will be loſt in the totality.

For this diſpoſition, it is neceſſary that the painter ſhould make a particular ſtudy of the dignity and quality of colours; from whence it will be underſtood, that when, for example, I ſay that yellow is a colour in its nature luminous, it is a reaſon for placing it where one would with the light to ſhine, according to the rules which I ſhall give in the following paragraph. The obſcure colours are more proper than the light to be put in the foreground, becauſe air illuminates all dark colours, and for the ſame reaſon it might be underſtood that the painter had ſuppoſed little air between the eye and the object repreſented; this one cannot demonſtrate with ſo much evidence in clear

things, becauſe all the clare which one makes in a painting, will always appear weak in compariſon to natural light; and for that reaſon able artiſts have always made in the foreground of their paintings ſome obſcure maſs in the firſt ſtage.

Red is the moſt lively colour, but at the ſame time, it is the leaſt fine; becauſe by its nature it has no connection either with light or darkneſs: it admits however of the one and the other, loſing its purity as I have ſaid above. It is neceſſary to place it where one would wiſh to make the parts moſt brilliant, and moſt advanced, becauſe, from its nature one cannot place it much behind, without mixing it with the violet and gilded colour. If one would with to place it in a luminous part of the painting, one ſhould do it without mixing it with white, otherwiſe it will always remain opaque, red, and ordinary.

Blue is a colour in its nature opaque, and one has to place it in an obſcure ſituation of the compoſition; and then it is proper to guard it by mixing it with white, which would always produce a colour of air, and which, in place of advancing, would reſtrain it, and deſtroy the force of its quality.

For the ſame reaſon one might employ the golden colour in luminous and advanced ſituations.

Green is the moſt ſoft colour, becauſe it is compoſed of a luminous and a dark colour, and for that reaſon it forms a very grateful half

tint. The two extremes, that is, white and black ſhould be employed, the one and the other in the ſame manner, becauſe they deſtroy all colours, not having any colour natural to themſelves, and for that reaſon they might ſerve the judicious artiſt to combine the moſt contrary colours. One might adduce many examples upon that, but I ſhall chooſe only two of the moſt ſignificant. Rembrant has given to ſhade the moſt incompatible colours, leaving only one place illuminated with theſe colours, ſeparating the one from the other; and when the compoſition obliged him to bring them near, he illuminated artificially the one, and obſcured the other; becauſe, if he had placed them conjunctively, he would not have repreſented that light and ſhade according to the rules of clare obſcure. Barroccio, to the contrary, has given to his paintings an agreeable harmony, by illuminating all the colours with white, which took from them all their vigor; and by theſe means his paintings had a very raiſed clare obſcure. Finally, to give an idea of the taſte of theſe two painters, I ſay, that Rembrant has painted all his ſubjects as if he had ſeen them in a cave, where only enters a little ray of the ſun to enliven his harmony; and without giving more light than was neceſſary to diſtinguiſh one colour from another. Barroccio, to the contrary, appears to have ſeen his hiſtory in the air, and the clouds, where, between the light and reflections, he left ſcarcely any ſhade, and by the abundance of the clare

obſcure he formed only a reſplendant painting.

'According to this, I believe the judicious painter ought to employ theſe two different taſtes, each according to its place; but between the two extremes, it appears to me, that Rembrant ſurpaſſes Barroccio; becauſe one might find his taſte in nature, and that of Barroccio is only in imagination; and whatſoever thing one feigns, ſhould be formed in truth; becauſe, as Horace ſays,'

Fieta voluptatis cauſa ſint proxima veris.

I have ſaid, that with three colours one forms all tints. Pure colours are more worthy, and of more vigour than compoſed colours; and for that reaſon it is neceſſary to place them in a ſituation that one would wiſh to make moſt viſible, and moſt conſpicuous in a work, and to have care not to put them in the ground of a painting, or in a group. Two pure colours never agree well together; becauſe, as every beauty is nothing more than a hidden variety, of courſe, in two pure colours it requires a third to unite them. Likewiſe three ſimple colours will never have a pleaſing effect, but will, notwithſtanding, be leſs diſagreeable than two only. This is to be underſtood in general of colours that have the ſame degree of force and purity; becauſe, as I have ſaid before, making one thing all clear, and another all obſcure with white and black, will form a clare obſcure, but not harmony.'

It is therefore neceſſary to unite colours well, and to obſerve, that of three colours, two ſhould be mixed to make the compoſition, and the third ſhould be left pure: by this method it will have union and variety. If it were neceſſary to employ two only, the third ſhould be mixed with the two. For example, the violet and the yellow will be always well united if one changes the violet with the blue. If one puts a deep roſe colour much charged with yellow, it will make a greeniſh colour. The roſe and the green united together will go pretty well. One may alſo employ blue and the golden colours; but with the remembrance that the roſe colour and yellow are too lively, in compariſon to the blue, which is almoſt obſcure; from whence it is neceſſary to deaden the livelineſs of the golden colour, to equilibriate the ſhade of the blue. For that reaſon blue, which partakes of green, and cinaber that make a kind of aurora, go very well together; and by this rule one might alter ſoftly all colours, in a manner that may appear neither crude or harſh. In this rule is not to be comprehended only the drapery, and the other things tinted, but alſo the ground, fields, and the fleſh.

I recommend painters always to decide and complete the principal things before the others, and to remember that rules ſerve to explain the beautiful of nature, and not the contrary. A painter ſhould read and ſtudy well the hiſtory of the ſubject he would repreſent,

to know what light, what time, what day, and what perſonages he has to put in his ſcene, and in what age is the event; becauſe it would be very improper to paint a king in old clothes, or of mixid colours, after the manner of an harlequin; and it would be equally improper to paint a girl in brown clothes, or a boy with ſtrong colours, or a hero in roſy colours; or the ſoldiers flogging Chriſt in the uniform of French ſoldiers, and in hats after the Pruſſian mode; or a philoſopher with clothes of ſparkling and lively ſtuff, and of colours ſoft and tranſparant. Finally, it would be improper to paint a council or a feaſt of the Gods by imitating the colouring of Rembrant; as it would be abſurd to repreſent Eneas in Hell after the taſte of Barroccio: becauſe a melancholy ſubject ought to cauſe ſadneſs in him who views it, and of courſe it ought not to be compoſed of lively and cheerful colours. In ſubjects oppoſite to theſe, one ought to uſe ſimple and obſcure colours, and the light ought not to appear of a cheerful day, or of a pleaſing harmony; the clares ought to be concentured in one place only, nor ought to be complicated or diſperſed, as I ſhall explain elſewhere.

VII.

Of Compoſition.

Compoſition requires many things. Firſt, it is of advantage that the painter knows how to imagine well the hiſtory, after having read it many times until he has learnt it by heart. Not

ought he to content himself with only chosen passages, but he ought to study the entire history, in order to know the characters of all the persons which he has represented; this he cannot know without examining all their lives to judge with what view the action was done which is to be represented; because a bad man might do a good action; but the painter ought notwithstanding to make appear his character, be it in the figure, or countenance of the person, showing the reasons which operated him. It is necessary also to refer to the time, place and customs of the people that are represented, and to give them the proper dresses of the nation and age in which they lived; and in case he cannot find monuments in books to make it known to him, he should endeavour to know the nations from whom they have taken their customs, laws, and arms; or at least the nations remote or near, from whence they have drawn their customs, such as the Greeks from the Egyptians, or the Romans from the Greeks, &c; and for that reason, one has to read authors who treat of their principal passions, to form a true idea of the persons. One might also on some occasions draw useful conclusions from present customs; because in general all nations agree in the foundation of human nature, and confronting present customs with those of the ancients we find they seldom differ entirely. It is likewise necessary to denote the country by the trees, climate, rivers, seas, or by the edifices of its architecture, or by its particular taste in the

arts; becauſe it would be an extravagance to put the Apollo of Belvedere in an edifice of Babylon, or a modern figure in a martyrdom of a ſaint a thouſand years ago.

It is alſo neceſſary to think of the particular ſituation, and that the light of the place agrees with the ſubject, and to make the furniture and interior architecture which is proper to the ſame ſubject, and to conſider generally that the world has not been entirely the ſame in the time of Cain and Enoch, as it is at preſent; and that then they did not build of the compoſed order, and that ornaments and luxuries were not then in uſe; and finally, one has to know in what age the arts and ſciences have been invented, or when they have been introduced into a country: when they have flouriſhed and enjoyed the higheſt point of perfection, and when they began to decay, until they precipitated themſelves into barbarity.

It now only remains to ſpeak directly of the rules of the compoſition of the figures. The rules to be obſerved in each figure, are principally the contraſt and contrapoſition of the members, the expreſſion, convenience, quality, and age of the perſons.

Contraſt, or be it contrapoſition of the members, ſignifies that if one would wiſh to advance an arm, one ought to retract the leg from the ſame ſide, and alſo the other arm ought to be drawn back, and the leg of that ſide ought to be advanced. The two arms ought not to be equally advanced, becauſe one

cannot draw back the two legs at once without making the figure fall. The head ought to incline to that ſide where the arm is raiſed, and to turn to that part where the hand is moſt advanced.

No member ſhould form a rectangle; nor ſhould ever two members have the ſame parrallel between them. One hand ought never entirely to meet with the other, and no extremity ought to be in a line perpendicular and horizontal with the other; nor ſhould one find a foot and two hands, the feet and one hand to form a direct line: this would be a great error.

A group is an union of figures, which ought all to tie one with another. They ought to be compoſed of an unequal number, as of 3, 5, 7, &c. Of all equal numbers thoſe which are compoſed of two unequal are the moſt admiſſible; but one can never uſe doubled pairs with grace. Thoſe of the firſt order are, for example, 6, 10, 14, &c. the others 4, 8, 12, &c. Each group ſhould form a pyramid, and at the ſame time it ſhould be of a round form as much as is poſſible in its relief. The greateſt maſs ought to be in the middle of the group, endeavouring always to place the little parts at the edges in order that the group may become more light and pleaſing. It is alſo neceſſary to ſeek to give profundity proportioned to the field of the group; that is, not to place the figures in a file, in order that it might produce a pleaſing air, from the variety of the greatneſs of the forms;

and from the play and accidents of the clare obſcure, which one always meets on like caſes. One ought equally to obſerve, as I have ſaid above, that there be never many extremes in a direct line, either horizontal, perpendicular, or oblique; that no head be horizontal or perpendicular with another; that no extremities, ſuch as heads, hands, feet, &c. can form a regular figure, ſo well as triangular, ſquare, pentagonal, &c.; that two members have never an equal diſtance between them, nor that there be two members, two legs, or two arms of the ſame figure in equal foreſhortening; finally, that no member be repeated; and if one ſhows any exterior part by the right-hand, it is neceſſary to diſcover the inward part by the left-hand, and to endeavour always to ſhow the moſt beautiful parts, which are generally ſpeaking, all the joints, ſuch as the neck, ſhoulders, elbows, [illegible], hip, knees, tibia, ſpinal and breaſt. The ſeparts are beautiful, for two different reaſons; becauſe, in the extremities one might ſhow much expreſſion and ſcience; and the others, ſuch as the back and breaſt of a man, are the moſt grand, and beautiful to unite in a group a great maſs of the ſame pleaſing colour, as is the fleſh colour; and to give a grateful repoſe to the ſight either in the clare or obſcure. In women, all naked parts are pleaſing to be ſeen, as well before as behind, excepting thoſe parts which decency requires to be hidden. It is notwithſtanding neceſſary to be known, that hiding ſome parts with artifice augments their beauty

and grace; becauſe, it is certain that a breaſt not entirely diſcovered appears much better than that which is fully in view, and the ſame happens in the other parts, which, hidden, have more grace than if entirely ſeen: from whence he who diſcovers nakedneſs more than decency, excites in ſpectators only laſciviouſneſs, without gaining eſteem; becauſe the art does not depend upon theſe things. The reaſon why a naked women in a painting pleaſe more than men, are two: The firſt, is that their complexions are more agreeable, and the clair obſcure appears more rotund, and of courſe the muſcles are more graceful; and for this reaſon it will always appear better in a beautiful youth than in a robuſt man. The ſecond reaſon is, becauſe it is more eaſy to ſee women naked in a painting than in nature; for which reaſon they appear more ideal than the bodies of men which we are at liberty to ſee when we pleaſe. There is alſo a third reaſon which every one may imagine.

If it be neceſſary to put more groups united, one obſerves the ſame rule which I have given for a group of an unequal number of figures; that is, to conſider to place an unequal number of groups; in caſe, however, that this number of groups or pyramids had not place on account of the painting not being ſufficiently large, one might make an intire group, and two halves at the other ſides, taking care to obſerve the laws preſcribed in the profundity and number of figures. The principal figure ought al-

ways to be in the middle of the group; and if many are equally principals one ought to ſeek to place the whole near the centre; and always in the ſecond ſtage, and never in the firſt, in order that one might ſee them ſurrounded by the other objects, and raiſe them by means of clare obſcure and perſpective. It is alſo neceſſary that the compoſition in general forms always a ſemicircle, be it concave or convex, becauſe both the principal and moſt brilliant one can place in a commodious ſtyle in the centre.

One ought likewiſe generally to have regard to the variety; that is, to ſhow the moſt beautiful parts of the ſubject in general, and of the figures, however without adopting the defect of ſhowing always certain parts, and hiding others. Variety is a thing very eſſential, and to follow it, one ought to have care to ſhow all the moſt beautiful parts of the ſubject, and of each figure in particular, but without falling into the oppoſite error. When one can, one ought to place in a compoſition perſons of both ſexes, and of every age, which will produce a pleaſing variety in the expreſſion and action; and one ſhould likewiſe ſee that they have ſymmetry and equilibrium between one part of the painting and the other, but without loading weight upon weight, or weight againſt weight in an horizontal or perpendicular line.

VIII.

Of Grace.

It is almoſt impoſſible to define Grace; and for that reaſon I ſhall ſpeak of it only in deſcribing the effects which it produces in the arts. It is certain, that it does not conſiſt in colours, forms, or in clare obſcure, taking each of theſe things ſeparately; although it is in all theſe things united together, in a manner, that if one fails there is no longer Grace. Many confound grace with beauty, which is only a part that reſides in the forms, as we know there can be beautiful forms without grace. Others, with equal equivocation, place it in harmony, which has only connection with colours, and is the laſt part, becauſe it requires clare obſcure to render it viſible. Nor does grace conſiſt in clare obſcure, becauſe the function of that is to ſhow the waving or the relief of things. Notwithſtanding, we know that without theſe three things, one cannot obtain grace in painting, and much leſs without variety; and for that reaſon we ſee, that however beautiful a thing may be, if it be without variety, it cannot have grace; from whence beauty is a quality ſubordinate to grace.

Grace, therefore, according to my opinion, is of two kinds; one natural and ſimple, and the other compoſed. That of the firſt kind one might find in all things, and gees with

beauty; the other reſults from the union of various things, which have the firſt grace in themſelves, and form with ſaid union a third thing, which is neither beauty or harmony, and which enchants, by reducing all the reſt to acceſſory parts.

I ſhall not ſay more of its eſſence, and proceed to explain how a painter might acquire it. All things which we can paint have form, colour, and of courſe clare obſcure, or light and ſhade; to repreſent them therefore gracefully, it is neceſſary to give to each of theſe parts much variety, and in this manner they will acquire grace; obſerving, however, not to give an equal variety to each of theſe parts, becauſe it would then ceaſe to be true variety, and would be deficient in the true fundament of grace.

This one might prove by ſketching a ſimple outline, or letter, becauſe, varying it in force and delicacy, it will have a grace which is not in its form, as one might ſee by writing letters in a beautiful hand, but of lines of equal force and thickneſs. Of courſe grace principally conſiſts in variety.

This variety renders alſo new things pleaſing, which after one is accuſtomed to them, do not delight ſo much, loſing the merit of variety, and for that reaſon, old people are leſs ſenſible of the pleaſure of novelty, becauſe having ſeen ſo much, they no longer, or very rarely, find variety.

To give, therefore, this grace to painting, and to pleaſe our ſenſes by its means, it is neceſſary to preſent variety to the eye; becauſe in this manner it will give to the ſpectator the pleaſure of novelty, making him forget one thing to learn another; and taking from him the diſguſt produced by continuation, and making him obſerve the moſt remarkable things in variety itſelf, as we ſee happens in a bunch of flowers, in which a roſe, for example, is diſtinguiſhed among many other little flowers, which, for an inſtant, make one forget the greater ones, and the eye paſſes from one to another object, always enjoying the novelty, by the variety of the different things which each has in its natural grace.

IX.

Of Grace in Contour.

The Grace of Contour conſiſts in that which we call Elegance, and which is eaſe united to the variety of the forms. One might find elegance alſo where there is not correctneſs, becauſe the firſt belongs to beauty, and the ſecond to grace.

To explain this, I will adduce examples of three famous painters, Correggio, Carravaggio, and Rubens, who are in equal degree diſtant from rigorous beauty, or at leaſt from correctneſs; but with regard to grace and elegance, they differ infinitely. Carravaggio had neither variety or correctneſs; and for that reaſon his

deſign is worth nothing. Rubens was deſtitute of beauty and every correctneſs, but had more variety than Carravaggio, and for that reaſon he is more tolerable. Correggio, in ſpite of ſome little incorrectneſs, poſſeſſed ſuch variety, elegance, and grace, as to do away that defect; and with theſe advantages he has produced a particular taſte in deſign, which would be the moſt noble and moſt beautiful, if he were not inclined a little to uniformity; and this was the part which the Carracci's moſt adopted.

It is neceſſary, therefore, in deſign, to ſeparate elegance from grace, becauſe grace conſiſts in the union of elegance with variety; and if one of theſe two things be wanting, there can be no grace. Elegance conſiſts in avoiding all extremes in the forms, and in a certain equilibrium in the concave and convex contours. Rubens uſed too much the convex lines, which rendered his forms heavy and ordinary. Correggio, to the contrary, united the concave and convex contours with ſuch proportion, that he attained the higheſt excellence and lightneſs. Carracci in imitating him, knew not how to maintain that equilibrium, and inclined too much to the convex.

All theſe obſervations one might make upon the ancient ſtatues, and without going out of the Pharneſian palace, conſidering the different taſte which there is between the famous Glicon Hercules, and the other which is by his ſide, and between the original parts of the firſt, and thoſe which have been modernly reſtored. One

might make the ſame obſervations in the Flora of the ſame palace, and the Commodus, which wants every elegance. The Hercules, which is of the ſublime taſte, in ſpite of his ſize and force, appears very light when viewed at a diſtance, and the other ſtatues, although not ſo large and thick, appear heavy and ordinary. Theſe ſame reflections one might repeat in ſeeing the other ſtatues of the firſt order, as the Apollo, the Laocoon, &c. and here one might know the difference between the Grecian taſte, and that which is called Roman, in which is always found a kind of harſhneſs, and want of elegance.

If Domenichino had poſſeſſed that part, he would have been moſt excellent; but the privation of elegance is a great injury to him. Raphael would have been elegant in the higheſt degree, if he had maintained a little more rotundity; that is, if in ſome parts he had not ngthened too much the ſtraight lines: he was, however, famous in the proportion of the variety of the lines, and without that imperfection he would have been equal to the ancients of the firſt rank. From the ſame cauſe it ariſes, that he was leſs happy in the figures, and leſs delicate in his women and children; and to the contrary, he was admirable in the nervous nature of his old people, philoſophers, apoſtles, &c. but when he wiſhed to be graceful, he fell into rotundity and planes. Michael Angelo ought not to be cited in this article of elegance, becauſe he did not know it; and

ſince thoſe who pretend to imitate him, are in that more defective than him, it is uſeleſs to meſtion them. One has to remark, as a general rule, that without variety one cannot produce elegance; and although any one may wave well, if he does not equilibriate his waving in the reſt of the forms he will never attain that intent; and this was the capital defect of Rubens. In ſhort, any form repeated too many times deſtroys elegance; and to the contrary, one ſhall attain it by changing the forms before they are perfectly finiſhed; becauſe if they were finiſhed, they could certainly make variety, but not elegance. So that, in wiſhing to make a round form, for example, before compleating the half circle, it will be neceſſary to twiſt a little the curve, and to terminate it by making an obtuſe angle. In nature, which the painter avails of, nothing is perfectly round or ſquare, and all is a continued alternative of figures.

The other circumſtance which correſponds to the contours, regards compoſition, which I ſhall explain in that article.

X.

Of Grace in Clare Obſcure.

Grace having ſtability in elegant variety, we ſhall ſee how it ought to enter in clare obſcure. Even in clare obſcure, it has been ſaid to be from the maſſes of light and ſhade being of different force and grandeur. Making them in

this manner, they will be able to produce variety, and of courſe grace. I ſhall give ſome detail of this ſubject.

One ſhould always have care to chooſe a principal light, and to place it in that ſituation which one would wiſh to be moſt conſpicuous and brilliant, and to have care that all the painting has not a ſimilar light of equal force, and obſerving the ſame in ſhade, one ſhall attain much of grace in all the work.

This done, one might diſtribute the half tints in different degrees, in a manner that they might ſerve to make the two aforeſaid greateſt extremes reſplendent, and one ſhould be attentive not to let one's ſelf be puzzled by a certain falſe brilliant clare obſcure which has deceived many painters; becauſe by much relief and force in things, that is, making violent contraſts, and joining two extremes, ſuch as the greateſt clare and the greateſt obſcure, one deſtroys all grace, and the effect of the half tint, and that which is more, the grace of the ſame colouring; becauſe, as I have ſaid, the two extremes, white and black, are not true, and to give grace to a painting, it is neceſſary that all the things which are in a painting be more or leſs viſible, in order that it might have a perfect variety, in which conſiſts grace; and this is not to be obtained without a great attention to the gradations of the clares and obſcures.

One has alſo to obſerve the value of the colours, as has been ſaid in the article of colour-

ing, becauſe all clares being more pleaſing than obſcures, one ought not to deſtroy the grace of a countenance, or of a clear drapery, by oppoſing it to a ſtrong obſcure with the view of giving it greater force, as ſo many painters generally do, and as Guercino did. It is therefore neceſſary in every thing to preſerve its character and proper value, and even to give to the clear fleſh a correſpondent ſhade; and for a ground, things alſo more gradated; preſerving thus, union with variety, becauſe it would be ridiculous to make a white coat with the ſhades all black, that colour not being able to change its nature, or to alter its natural clare or obſcure.

The firſt reaſon why clear things pleaſe, comes from Nature itſelf. Clare reſembles light, of which we avail much: from whence painters, who are gloomy in their works, are alſo ſo in their ideas and characters, becauſe all that is in their nature.

It is therefore neceſſary to give to paintings all the cheerfulneſs one can; and if neceſſity obliges one to repreſent ſome melancholy ſubject with an open air, one ought to make the light come much from the ſide, in order that it might produce much ſhade.

In ſhort, without expreſſion one cannot have propriety; without propriety, not beauty; and without beauty one cannot give grace; from whence if one deſigns a woman like a man, however beautiful it may be, it will not have propriety, nor beauty ſuitable to the object, nor grace.

XI.

Of Grace in Compoſition.

I have many times ſaid that in all parts variety forms Grace; now I ſhall explain how one may attain that variety in Compoſition. It is neceſſary firſt to conſider, that variety ought to go conjunctively with other things which I have ſaid to be neceſſary for good Compoſition, and by obſerving which, no impediment will be found to variety, becauſe our art is very liberal, and one might profit from all things. All the errors of many painters who know not how to unite reaſon with taſte, ariſe from their applying themſelves more to acceſſary parts than to principals. To avoid this they ſhould have care to diſpoſe of the principal figure always firſt, and to give it all the nobleneſs and propriety which its character deſerves. From thence they ſhould proceed to diſpoſe of the principal figures of each group, and each figure in particular, ſeeking not to make any inferior thing, if ſomething of more conſequence remains to be done. By this method they will enable their genius to conceive all the parts with diſtinction, and to know more eaſily if they have fallen in any error or repetition. This done, let them examine all the work, to ſee if they have obſerved all the rules eſtabliſhed in compoſition, and certainly they will find comprized there propriety and neceſſary variety, becauſe all things depend one upon the other.

In all paintings one has to endeavour as much as poſſible, to introduce every age, ſex and eſtate, and the different impreſſions which external things can produce: in this manner one ſhall attain propriety, and with that variety, beauty, and finally grace. If to this be added, giving to each figure the dreſſes which correſpond to heir eſtate, ſex, and age, with obſerving the rules of clare obſcure, deſign, &c. there will be in the painting a wonderful variety of particular beauties, whoſe union will comprehend the moſt beautiful ſpectacle, and moſt perfect grace. With regard to propriety, I have to ſay, that if it occurs to be able to paint any object which in itſelf has not grace, it is neceſſary to procure it by making beautiful and moſt conſpicuous the parts which are moſt neceſſary. For example, nothing is more ugly among human figures than ſatyrs, fawns centaurs, and tritons, and to them may nevertheleſs be given beauty and grace, by ſtudying the propriety of their nature. In the human parts of the centaurs one can ſhew the ſtrength of a horſe, uniting the bones more ſtrongly than in a man: in the ſatyrs, one ſhould make known the avidity of its goaty nature: in a triton the legerity and ſubtilty of ſkin, and its viſcidity, and the muſcles, without the appearance of that hot ſubſtance which comes from the blood, and in ſanguinary animals ſwells the veins and fleſh. The ſame ought to be underſtood in all other things, in which by obſerving propriety one ſhall attain the union of variety; from whence ariſes grace.

XII.

Of the Proportions of the Human Body.

Infinite are the deſcriptions of the proportions of the human body, but ſcarce any two accord. Thoſe which I have read are not very clear, nor do I believe they can give to painters a juſt idea of the ſubject. Beſides that, ſome authors have limited too much the combinations that could produce an uniform proportion in the figures. Others, and among whom is Albert Durer, have explained a great number and variety of proportions; but they ſerve for nothing, except to thoſe who would wiſh to imitate his taſte. I ſhall therefore alſo ſay ſomething on this ſubject, which might ſerve for all taſtes, founding it upon nature and art.

It is a general maxim to divide a figure in a determinate number of heads or faces; but this method will be good for ſculptors only, and not for painters, who never ſee the heads juſt, becauſe the perſpective hides at leaſt one third of the fourth ſuperior part; and the width of the members cannot be meaſured with ſuch exactneſs as they are meaſured by ſculptors, becauſe they would appear meagre and ſtraight upon the plain ſurface, in oppoſition to what it appears by the perſpective; becauſe as we ſee all things with two eyes, we ſee the contours of things greater than the juſt diameter; and this happens in nature as well as in ſtatues, but not in painting. The ancients alſo ob-

ſerved that, and therefore we ſee, that their bas-reliefs are thicker than their ſtatues; to be underſtood, the beautiful bas-reliefs, comparing them with the contemporary ſtatues.

Painters have occaſion to uſe variety infinitely more than ſculptors, and of courſe have leſs ſubjections. Raphael, in a certain ſenſe only multiplied the taſte of the ancients of the ſecond order, by uniting it with a certain truth of which ſculpture has not availed, either from rule or from taſte, of all ſorts of proportions, without being able to decide if one were better than an other; and I know ſome of his figures, which have little more than ſix heads and an half; a proportion which would not be ſufferable in any other one Raphael.

The ſtructure of the human body has ſuch a ſymmetry, that it gives the idea of its motion, and this concordance of members is ſuch, that to be able to produce that effect, one has to obſerve, what is called correctneſs of deſign. I ſhall therefore proceed to treat of this ſuccinctively, propoſing that which one ought to do to obtain it.

The figure which one would wiſh to make being determined, one may deſign the head of the ſize one likes, obſerving, notwithſtanding, for a rule, that the ſmalleſt head a painting admits of, is the ninth part of the figure, and the largeſt is a ſixth part; theſe two dimenſions are the two extremes; the general ſize being of an eighth or a ſeventh part of the figure. The neck ſhould then be made equal to half of the head. . . . .

NOTE of the EDITOR.

NOTWITHSTANDING I have ſtudied with indeſcribable pains to extract from the ſketches of Mengs, the rules which he would with to give upon the proportions of the human body, I have found it impoſſible to compoſe from his fragments any thing which can give ſatisfaction, and ſerve for rules in a matter ſo important and delicate; from whence I have thought it proper to ſuppreſs the remainder of that chapter, in order not to expoſe myſelf by propoſing errors for rules.

Whoever would with to know the proportions of the head only, may have recourſe to Winkelman, where he explains the ſyſtem of Mengs, in his firſt edition of the *Hiſtory of the Arts*. But I believe, that not even Winkelman comprehended well that matter, and his French tranſlator compleatly diſfigured it; ſo that in the laſt edition of that book, this article is almoſt ſuppreſſed. As for that of the Italian tranſlation, recently publiſhed at Milan, it appears to me it has compleatly finiſhed to confuſe and obſcure the poor author.

It is in the power alone of ſome learned artiſt of fine taſte, and who has ſtudied the works of Mengs; but this is not to be hoped, except from a youth well educated in the right rudiments of the art, and not from thoſe already profeſſors, who hold nothing for good, expect what their own blind practice had imbibed in their early years, and know not how,

to leave off in old age, nor can ſuffer that their contemporary, Mengs, ſhould riſe above them, and become their maſter.

Thoſe either do not look at his works, or elſe they look at them with pre-occupation, and lacerate them without having ſeen them. This is a fact; and in Rome happens frequent proofs of it. It happened a little time ſince, that whilſt in a company of artiſts, and of *dilettanti* of every kind, they obſerved and praiſed two portraits of a young Venetian, a coxcomical painter, not Roman, but of a country which has never produced painters or ſculptors, even of the middling kind (although it buys ſculptures and paintings at a high price), hearing that this eſteemed youth was copying the portrait of Pope Rezzonico, done by Mengs, ſaid, *(petulanti ſplene cachino)*; that his pencil would loſe inſtead of gaining by that ſtudy. He, however, was ignorant that the aforeſaid youth, during the time he had been at Rome, had ſtudied only the paintings of Mengs, and particularly that of the Cabinet of the *Papiri*; which have been laterly engraven. Harpies could not have done worſe. It has happened to theſe paintings, as well as to thoſe of the rooms of the Vatican, that they ſtill continue to engrave them; by which Mengs ſaid, that they tranſlated Raphael into Venetian. The ſale of them is great, notwithſtanding, and will be ſo as long as amateurs are intelligent men.

FINIS.

PREFACE.

I SHOULD not attempt to write a preface to the following Tranſlation, were it not to apologize for ſo arduous an undertaking, which I am truly ſenſible required a man of great talents and no inferior erudition; but the love I have for the Author, both as a writer and an artiſt, made me hazard this feeble expoſition of his abilities, in hopes of being of ſervice to young ſtudents who cannot read his works in the languages of the original publications, and with the deſire of giving pleaſure to others who for mere amuſement may peruſe this Tranſlation, which certainly will contain matter truly intereſting either to the Literati, the Artiſt, or the Amateur.

Mengs, as an Author, is juſtly admired by all thoſe who have read his works in the languages in which they have been publiſhed, namely, in the Spaniſh and Italian, by the ſame Editor, the Chevalier Don Joſeph Nicholas D'Azara, Spaniſh Miniſter

at Rome. As an Artiſt, no unprejudiced perſon can ever have ſeen his beſt works without ſpeaking of him with the greateſt rapture and delight.

I have viſited the capital of Spain where the paintings of Mengs appear in all their greatneſs; and every one who has travelled through Spain muſt be ſenſible how high a fame he bears in that Country, where not to admire him (as an ingenious author has obſerved) is almoſt a violence againſt Church and State; an enthuſiaſm ſupported not by the wild rumor or folly of a day, but authoriſed by men of undoubted taſte and knowledge in the profeſſion. Almoſt every court in Europe has wiſhed to poſſeſs ſome paintings from his hand. Poland raiſed and ſupported him as long as it was able to ſupport itſelf; Rome acknowledges him as her greateſt ornament; Ruſſia, Naples, Florence courted him; and Spain looks on the ever-living monuments of his departed genius with all the ardour of religious adoration: from all theſe honors one muſt naturally be led to ſuppoſe he was not of the moſt common and ordinary rank of mankind.

The following works were originally written in various languages, and as the author could not be equally brilliant and correct in all, ſome parts will undoubtedly be found more excellent than others. The ſtyle and clearneſs of the ſentiments muſt

naturally have ſuffered, but however, the ideas and profundity of his knowledge in the arts will always appear the ſame.

His papers were found very confuſed, and although they were regulated by the Italian Editor with the deſire of correctneſs, yet in reducing the whole to one language, and by apparent confuſion in other reſpects, the ſenſe has been left in ſome parts very obſcure, and the ſtyle and phraſes, in many places, have remained inelegant.

It has not been my wiſh either to correct the ſtyle, or add to the elegance of this work, fearing that by producing a forced or affected improvement, I might have impaired the original ideas of the author, who never wrote any thing without well conſidering what he wrote, and whoſe genuine ſentiments will be of much more value than all the affectation of a brilliant ſtyle, in which, notwithſtanding, he will not be found deficient where his original language appears verbatim. I have neither the leiſure or abilities to afford me a hope of producing a truly perfect and elegant tranſlation, but an uſeful and juſt one is what I aim at, and in which I hope to be ſucceſsful. I have endeavoured to render the ſentiments of the author as plain and intelligible as I am able, and as he confeſſes to have written this work for Artiſts, (who are not all Literati) I hope I have purſued the moſt deſirable end. Criticiſm

will therefore be done away, as my only views in the following tranſlation were thoſe of amuſement, and the deſire of making the author better known to the Engliſh; and at the ſame time I lament, that no one of ſuperior abilities has attempted it before me, to have done him all the juſtice he deſerves: however, I truſt the following tranſlation will be found to contain the original ideas of the author, and that it will convince every one of his abilities as a writer; and his famous piece in All-ſouls College Oxford will ever be a ſufficient ſpecimen to give an idea of him as an artiſt.*

THE TRANSLATOR.

* The ſubject of this picture is our Saviour in the garden: it conſiſts of two figures in the foreground, highly finiſhed, and beautifully painted. It was ordered by a gentleman of that College, whilſt on his travels through Spain; but being limited to the price, he was obliged to chooſe a ſubject of few figures. This gentleman relates a ſingular anecdote of Mengs, which will further ſhow the profundity of his knowledge and diſcernment in things of antiquity. Whilſt an eſteemed Author, well known and valued in the Muſical World, was abroad collecting materials for his Hiſtory of Muſic, he found at Florence an ancient ſtatue of Apollo, with a bow and fiddle in his hand: this, he conſidered, would be ſufficient to decide the long conteſted point, whether or not the Ancients had known the uſe of the bow. He conſulted many people to aſcertain the certainty if this ſtatue were really of antiquity; and at laſt Mengs was deſired to give his opinion, who, directly as he had examined it, without knowing the cauſe of the inquiry,

said "there was no doubt but that the statue was of antiquity, but that the arms and fiddle had been recently added." This had been done with such ingenuity that no one had discovered it before Mengs; but the truth of the same was not to be doubted. Mengs has done but few paintings for England except copies; one however he did for Lord Cooper, another for Sir R. C. Hoare, and a few more for others, of which I shall give an account; and there are a few beautiful portraits and pieces of his in France, which are not mentioned in the list of his Paintings.

PAINTINGS done for England by A. R. MENGS.

The Holy Family, for Lord Cooper, done at Florence, 7 feet by 3.

Another Holy Family 7 feet by 5.

A Sibyl [illegible] half figure, on canvass.

Octavian and Cleopatra, with many figures, on canvass done for [illegible] R. C. Hearne.

A Magdalen half figure.

Christ after the Resurrection, with the Magdalen on her knees; on wood; done for the University of Oxford.

A copy of the School of Athens, for the Duke of Northumberland.

Portrait of the late Arch-Bishop of Salisbury.

Andromeda and Perseus, intended for England, but was taken by a French Privateer, and at last was bought in France by Mons. de Sartine, minister of the marine.

A Sketch in clare obscure of the Resurrection, was intended for the great painting for Salisbury Cathedral, 30 palms in height. It was begun, but his death prevented its being finished.

ENGRAVINGS from his PAINTINGS.

St. John the Baptist, and

The Holy Mary Magdalen from the originals in possession of the King of Spain—engraved by Carmona.

Our Lord after the Resurrection, when he appears to the Magdalen, said to be engraved by the same.

The Madonna and Child, engraved by Volpato.

The Sibyl half figure, mentioned above, engraved by Mosman.

[illegible] from a design of his, Christ in the garden, done from [illegible], engraved by Volpato, which is in the collection of prints [illegible] SCHOLA [illegible] PICTUR.

[illegible]